JOHN BYRNE ON LEGEND AND IMAGE

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH ON RUNE, VALIANT, AND MARVEL

MATT GROENING ON SIMPSONS COMICS & TV

DECEMBER 1993

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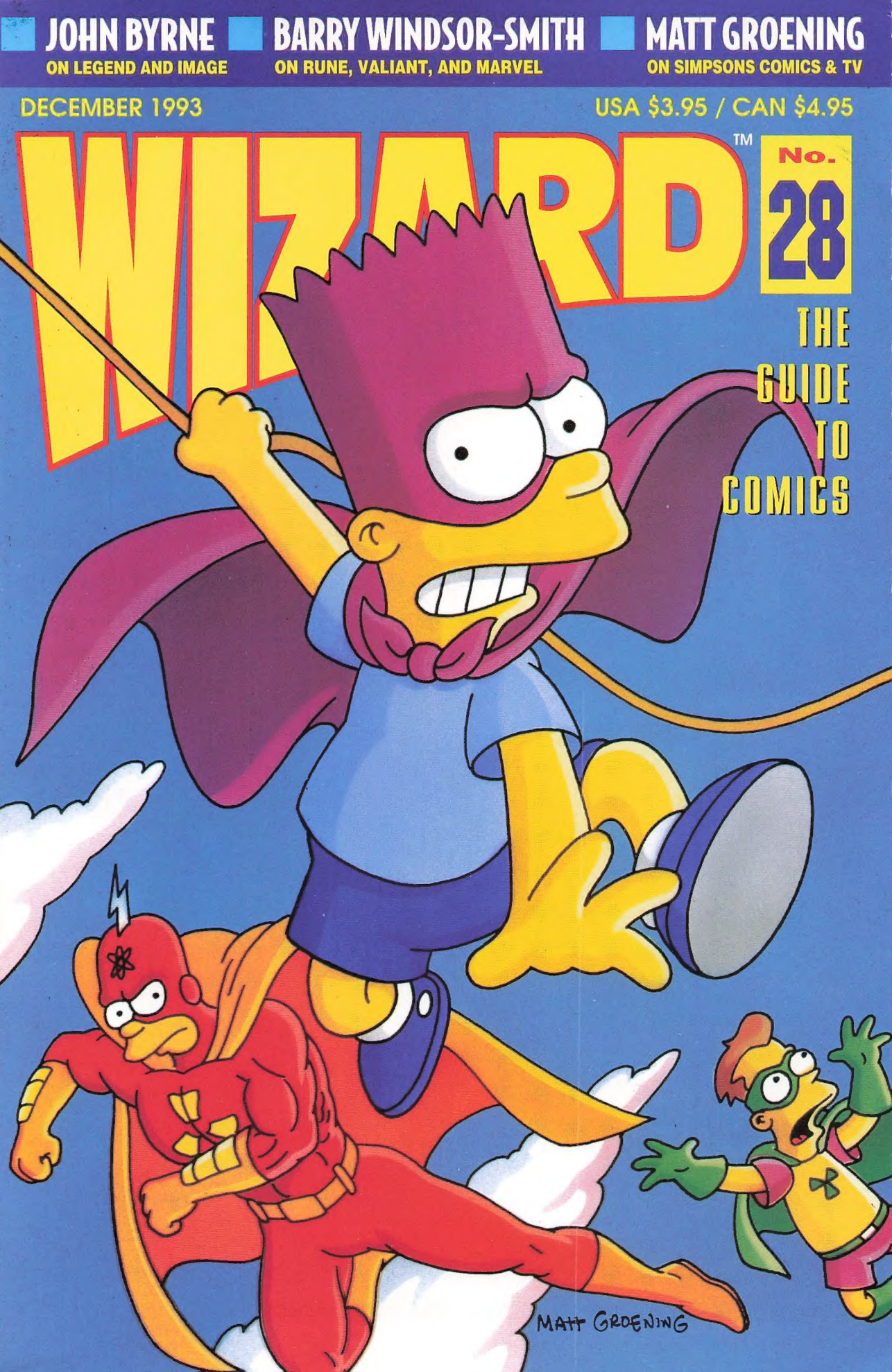
WIZARD™

No. 28

THE GUIDE TO COMICS



AMERICA'S #1 DYSFU

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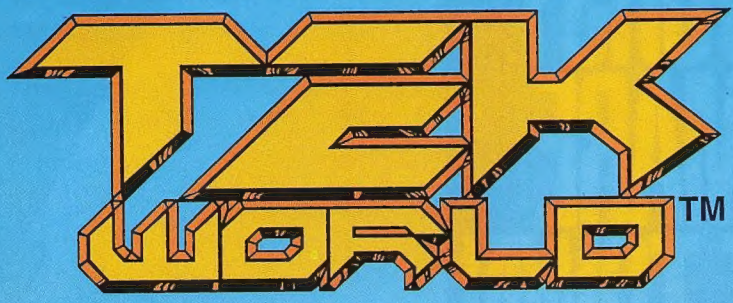
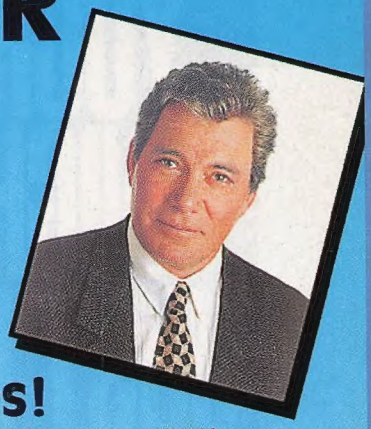
Another Blast From WILLIAM SHATNER





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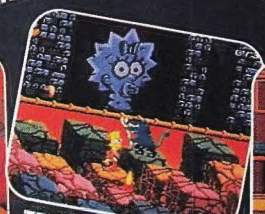
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WIZARD™

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Number 28
December 1993

MULTIPLE MAN ™ & © MARVEL COMICS.

With all the work he churns out, there must be at least four or five Joe Quesadas. See page 48.

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AN UNCUT SHEET OF CHROMIUM *NINJAK #1* COVERS!!!

TOO COOL!

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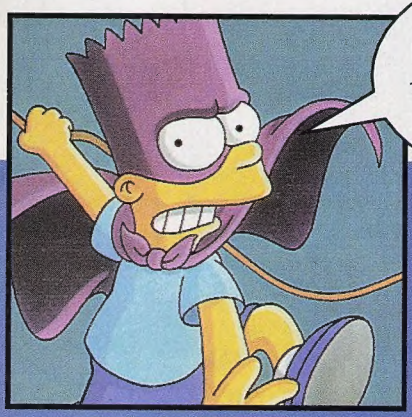

LOOK OUT! THERE'S A NEW SUPERDUDE IN TOWN!

Find out the scoop on all your favorite Simpsons *characters. Check it out on page 34.*

DID YOU KNOW THAT SOLAR INVENTED AN ELECTRIC SLINKY™? More startling facts are revealed about the original versions of today's hottest Valiant heroes on page 88.

SOLAR ™ & © WESTERN PUBLISHING.

THE MAXX ™ & © SAM KIETH.

"Hey, an interview with the Maxx?"
Of course not, he's a fictional character!
We talked to Sam Kieth and Bill Messner-Loebs.
Real guys talk about real stuff on page 71.

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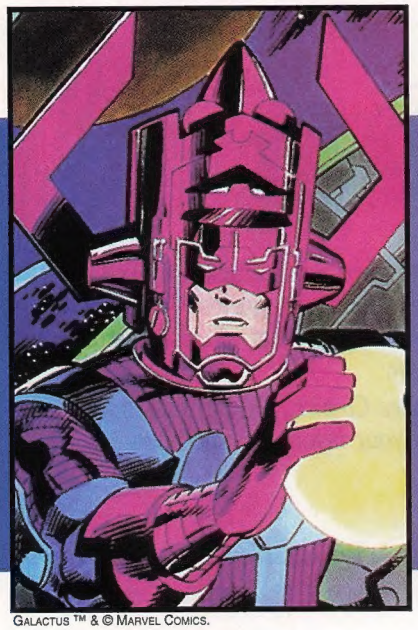
RUNE ™ & © MALIBU COMICS.

"I'm sorry Mr. Rune, but that molar is going to have to come out."
Find out who this bloodthirsty fellow is in the Barry Windsor-Smith interview. Turn to page 78.

"I think that the key works that we all look upon—whether it be *Maus* or *Watchmen*—they all have a place in our minds and hearts because they awakened our senses."
—Steve Bissette tells all on page 93.



GALACTUS ™ & © MARVEL COMICS.

GALACTUS'LL TELL YOUR FORTUNE FOR ONLY TEN BUCKS! Well, maybe not, but you will find out what was *supposed* to happen in *The Last Galactus Story* if you read the John Byrne article on page 42.

"LISTEN UP, BOY! I want you to read this magazine-thingy from top to back, or front to bottom, or however it is that you read these things, 'cause I don't have time to. Now get going!"

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WORLD DOMINATION
Writer: SCOTT EMERSON
Cover/Interior Artist: ACCELERATED DK
Ship date: NOVEMBER 1993
$3.95 U.S.A.
$4.15 CANADA

METALLICA #1 of 3

Lars Ulrich, influenced by the metal sound coming from Europe, joins with James Hetfield to record one song for a compilation album entitled *Metal Massacre*. The song was ill-received by critics, but little did anyone know it was the birth of the biggest heavy metal act in music—METALLICA! Read the official sory of Lars, James, Kirk, Cliff, and Jason—the way only METALLICA could tell it! With a live album coming next year, you can't afford to miss it!

▲METALLICA
Writer: JAMES HUDNALL (Ultraverse's *Hardcase, the Solution*)
Cover/Interior Artist: DAVE KENDALL (*Necroscope II*)
Ship date: November '93
$3.95 U.S.A. $4.15 CANADA

WORLD DOMINATION #1

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A LETTER FROM OUR PUBLISHER

PHOTO BY ARLENE SO, USING HER EXCELLENT LITTLE RICOH-SUAVÉ CAMERA.

The Players, from left to right:
Back Row: "Big Dude" Donato, "The Z-Man," Brian "The Black," Rob "Sammy" Samsel, "Willimina" Mirman, "Sir Jim" McLauchlin, Ilan "The Tooth Fairy," Kenny "Shamoo," Matt "The Card" Milliken
Middle Row: "Señorita" Carmen, "Queens" Winheim, "The Big Cheese," "Bearsby" Fountain, "Riles" Reilly, "Bronco" Cook
Kneeling: "Toy Boy" Cunningham, Robin "Boy Wonder" Ramos, "Mr. Furious" Tierney, "Country Boy" Wilkofsky

Just slightly better than the Mets.

It was cool and sunny on that Sunday afternoon, September 12, 1993. The staff of Wizard lined up on one side of the great battlefield, the staff of Valiant on the other. With steely eyes locked upon one another, adrenaline pumping through our bodies like fire, we all raised our weapons and let out the battle cry: "Play ball!"

And play we did. Wizard and Valiant locked horns recently (not so recently by the time you read this) at Tappan Park in Tappan, N.Y. The double-header was a blast, and a really great time was had by all. Highlights of the day: *Sportslook* Art Director Brad Fountain hitting a grand slam in the first game, and Joe Quesada dominating third base, seeing to it that many a Wizard base runner never got home. The results of the two games? 19-3 and 9-5, Wizard taking both games. A rematch, with bowling as the sport, is in the works.

After my fun bout with softball, it was off to work. I boarded a plane and attended the U.K.A.C. convention in London, England. I had a really great time, talked to some overseas *Wizard* fans, and met some industry professionals whose work I've long admired, including Glen Fabry, Alan Davis, Dave Gibbons, Gerhard, and Simon Bisley. I also met Sal Buscema, who had made the trip over to jolly ol' England, and I was able to congratulate Lou Bank on his new position at Marvel U.K.

While in London I hung out with Tony Lobito and Kyle Zimmerman from Image, and we had a really good time, but since we were only free at night—and since Kyle had a habit of getting us very lost—we didn't really do too much sight-seeing. Ah well, I'll be back again someday.

Before I split, just want to remind you that *Wizard*'s giant year-ending issue is coming next month. It contains over 300 pages of news, reviews, interviews, and profiles that will have everyone buzzing.

Wizard #29. Fasten your seat belts.

Cheers mate!

'93

Gareb S. Shamus
"Las Grande Fromago"

THE GUIDE WIZARD TO COMICS

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Magic Words

Pat McCallum, Creative Director

I don't know how it works, but Valiant Vision is awfully cool. If you can, go out and buy one of the Valiant Vision kits, don the goofy glasses, and start looking at every two-dimensional thing lying around the house. Don't forget to check out *Solar* #29 for its remarkable V.V. coloring. Ah, enough of this, on to the letters...

Dear Wizard,

I'm 15 years old and have been collecting comic books for three years. When I look over my comic boxes, with all the different writers and different artists, I can see the evolution of comics before my eyes. Three-quarters of my collection I bought as back issues, so I know the difference between comics today and comics of some years ago. I see that the styles have changed, the idea of superheroes have changed—almost the whole industry.

When I started collecting, all I knew about was Marvel. DC was too dull, and other companies never caught my eye. My main interest was *Captain America*. When I started, Ron Lim was drawing the title. I was very impressed and became a faithful reader. *Amazing Spider-Man* also caught my eye. At the time, Erik Larsen was the genius working on the web-shooter. I've always liked wholesome comic books which portrayed good moral values. That's why I've liked *Spider-Man* and *Captain America* so much.

Now many of you and your readers may think of me as a sissy and a wimp, but today's comics portray too much hate and violence. I am not a Batman reader, or a Superman reader, but it seems to me that their defeats have only had a bad influence. They show that crime does pay. Bane and Doomsday have both succeeded in destroying their foes, the good guys. This is what I mean by the "the industry has changed." What's happened to "the good guys always win"?

It used to be that superheroes beat their foes with courage and wits. But now, superheroes are fueled by vengeance and hate and are backed by awesome armories. Bane has just crushed the back of Batman. What will happen to him? Azrael will don the new Batman costume and will be led by rage to avenge Bruce Wayne's defeat like a madman. Many superheroes today are motivated by hate, including the Punisher, Wolverine, and Ghost Rider. I know that Batman first donned the costume of the Dark Knight to avenge his parents' death, but he wanted the judicial system of the United States to deal with the criminal. Besides, Batman is against guns. He *was* one of the few superheroes left who fought villains with their wits and courage...

When I first heard of the new super-company called Image, about a year and a half ago, I thought it was great: Marvel needed a kick in the pants anyway. I thought the age of quality comics was underway, with great art and great stories... But, unfortunately, I wasn't an avid reader of *X-Men* (by Jim Lee), *X-Force* (Rob Liefeld), and *Wolverine* (Marc Silvestri), and I didn't know what their titles were going to turn out like. Now one of my favorite artists, Erik Larsen, has changed the once-mysterious Savage Dragon; he is now a gun-wielding, chainsaw waving, and lust-crazy (you've seen the Savage Dragon special) warmonger...

But there are still worse. Jae Lee makes every character look like the devil himself. *WildC.A.T.s*, which sometimes seems like the only decent comic around at Image, still has its share of gore. But even Jim Lee is getting into the act with his Punisher-copying *Deathblow*. It's about a CIA assassin who discovers that he has a terminal disease and is trying to make amends for his sins, but he can't change. Get real! Anybody who wants to change his murderous ways to get into heaven can do it if he really wants to. God's not going to give him any brownie points for trying.

Another comic from Image that has disappointed me is *Shadowhawk*: another vengeance-driven hero. *Youngblood*'s Rob Liefeld seems to love the sight of blood shooting out of people's mouths. Who says blood is attractive? Plus, the Youngblood

team is supposed to be the nation's super-team—role models for kids and defenders of the American way of life. I was surprised when Shaft impaled a ninja clear through the gut with a sword in the mini-series. If that's the American way of life, well, folks, we're in deep doo-doo. And Marc Silvestri's new *Stryke Force* is probably another assassin team.

Why have blood lust and destruction suddenly become appealing to people? These comics will have a bad influence on today's young. I should know. About a year ago, my brother was a *Wolverine* fanatic. It got to a point where my brother would go into a rage over the littlest things. After he wasn't allowed to read the comic ever again, things changed—for the better.

I hope the comic industry will soon change. I understand horror comics for the adult reader, but it is too much for the younger generation. We already have many problems with drugs, sex, and violence, and comics only seem to influence them for the worse. If only comic books would help fight these problems without having to resort to characters like the Punisher and Ghost Rider. Many villains win the super-battles these days, only teaching that crime does pay. Almost every superhero has been killed now... I know that many people think that the superheroes with good moral values like Captain America and Superman are wimps, but there have to be many other ways to improve their image without making them another grunt with a gun.

Luc Sokolowski
Plano, TX

The best comics are those that don't rely on the latest trend to sell the book, like splattering blood, cannon-sized guns, or gimmick covers. The mark of a good comic is simple: good writing and good art.

Dear Wizard,

I've been reading the ongoing Iron Man vs. the X-Men debate in *Wizard* with no small amusement. My personal opinion is that the outcome of that particular battle would depend on how much advance preparation Tony Stark did. On short notice, the X-Men would have the advantage, if only because of their strength in numbers—but if Stark had, say, a week or so to plan it, I don't think the X-Men would stand a snowball's chance...

As for the odds of seeing the *X-Men* in *Iron Man* sometime soon, let's just say I'm working on it. There's a major arc coming up in #301-306 that'll pit Iron Man against a whole list of famous guest stars, and we're in the process of talking to the X-Office to see if X-Men will be available during the months in question. I can say, however, that Deathlok and the Hulk have already been approved...

Iron Man #301-306: "Crash and Burn." You heard it here first.

Len Kaminski
Marvel Comics

As most of you fans know, Len is the writer of, among other things, *Iron Man* for Marvel Comics. I (along with many other readers, I'd imagine), hope that the X-Men vs. Iron Man storyline comes to pass. If for no other reason than to lay to rest the debate that's been raging on in *Wizard* for more than a year now. (Sheesh, I thought we had put an end to this in last month's Magic Words column.)

Dear Wizard,

I was wondering why your magazine is so hypocritical. A lot of your issues put down the use of gimmicks in order to sell multiple issues of comic books... It has been published numerous times in your magazine that *Wizard* would not use this gimmick to sell more than one issue.

Now in issue #26 I noticed, by complete accident, that *Wizard* came polybagged with five different Creators Universe cards. This means that people who collect the *Wizard* inserts have to buy five copies for $20! I can imagine your reaction to be as follows... *If the money is too much...keep it in your pocket.* What kind of attitude is this? Sadly enough, that is not where it ends. Issue #6 was said to have two different covers, newsstand and direct market editions. So why does issue #26 have two different direct market covers?

If *Wizard* plans on using gimmicks such as these, why do you put them down? It is already hard enough trying to find the cards inserted in the newsstands editions of *Wizard*. I am not taking anything away from your magazine—it is a great publication. Please keep up the great work, not the gimmicks.

John Cassera
Schenectady, NY

AAARGHHH!! I am so sick of this "gotta own 'em all" mentality. The Creators Universe cards that were randomly inserted into *Wizard* #26 were a paid advertisement. It was originally planned to be one card and one card only, but a mix-up occurred when the advertiser (Dynamic) was figuring out how many cards they needed for this promotion, and they under-produced the card. This boo-boo didn't come to light until very late in the game, and Dynamic had to scramble to get more cards ready for insertion; otherwise, there would have been copies of *Wizard* #26 that did not contain a Creators Universe card. The result was the multiple card/random insertion that you weren't terribly thrilled with. To tell you the truth, we weren't too happy with it either, but sometimes these things happen.

As for fans "having" to buy five *Wizards* to make a set of these cards, that's stupid. If you get one of the cards, and you like how it looks, don't go out and buy the other four *Wizards*—go and buy the whole Creators Universe card set! It'll be a heck of a lot more enjoyable to own all the cards instead of just a select few, and it'll probably cost a little less, to boot.

As far as the multiple covers on *Wizard* #26, it was meant to generate a little excitement, nothing more. Based upon the favorable fan response we received when we ran the multiple covers on *Wizard* #6 (Green Hulk/Grey Hulk), it seemed like an okay stunt to pull. But then again, *Wizard* #6 came out almost two years ago, during a much simpler time. The news that there were two covers on *Wizard* #6 was met by exclamations of "Cool!" and "Really? Wow, I'd love to see them!" Nowadays, it appears that that takes a back-seat to "Me, me, me!", a symptom of the "It's only okay if I get one!" mentality. It's a shame. Though I haven't received very much mail in regards to the two different covers on #26, we'll do the same thing that we did with the multiple Image cards we used to produce: we'll let the fans decide what we should do. If the voters say "Nay" to the occasional (and always unsolicited) variable covers, then nay it is. Write in.

Dear Wizard,

I manage a comic book shop. When Topps came out with the line of Jack Kirby titles a few months ago, I expected a great deal of interest to be aroused simply because of his name. However, to my surprise, most of the comic book readers I spoke with at that time didn't even know who Jack Kirby is! I'm not just talking about young children; adults didn't seem to know either. More recently, DC's *The Golden Age* was released, and was compared by some to *Watchmen*. Again, many that I spoke to had never read or even heard of *Watchmen*. This is a relatively recent

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender, and three favorite titles to "Pen Pals," c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Word's address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Brian Hamm
Age: 19 Sex: M
440 Virginia Ave.
Madison, Ind. 47250

Likes: *WildC.A.T.s*, *Elfquest*, All X-titles.

Jason Syner
Age: 16 Sex: M
164 East Fredrick Ave.
Lake Mary, Fla. 32746

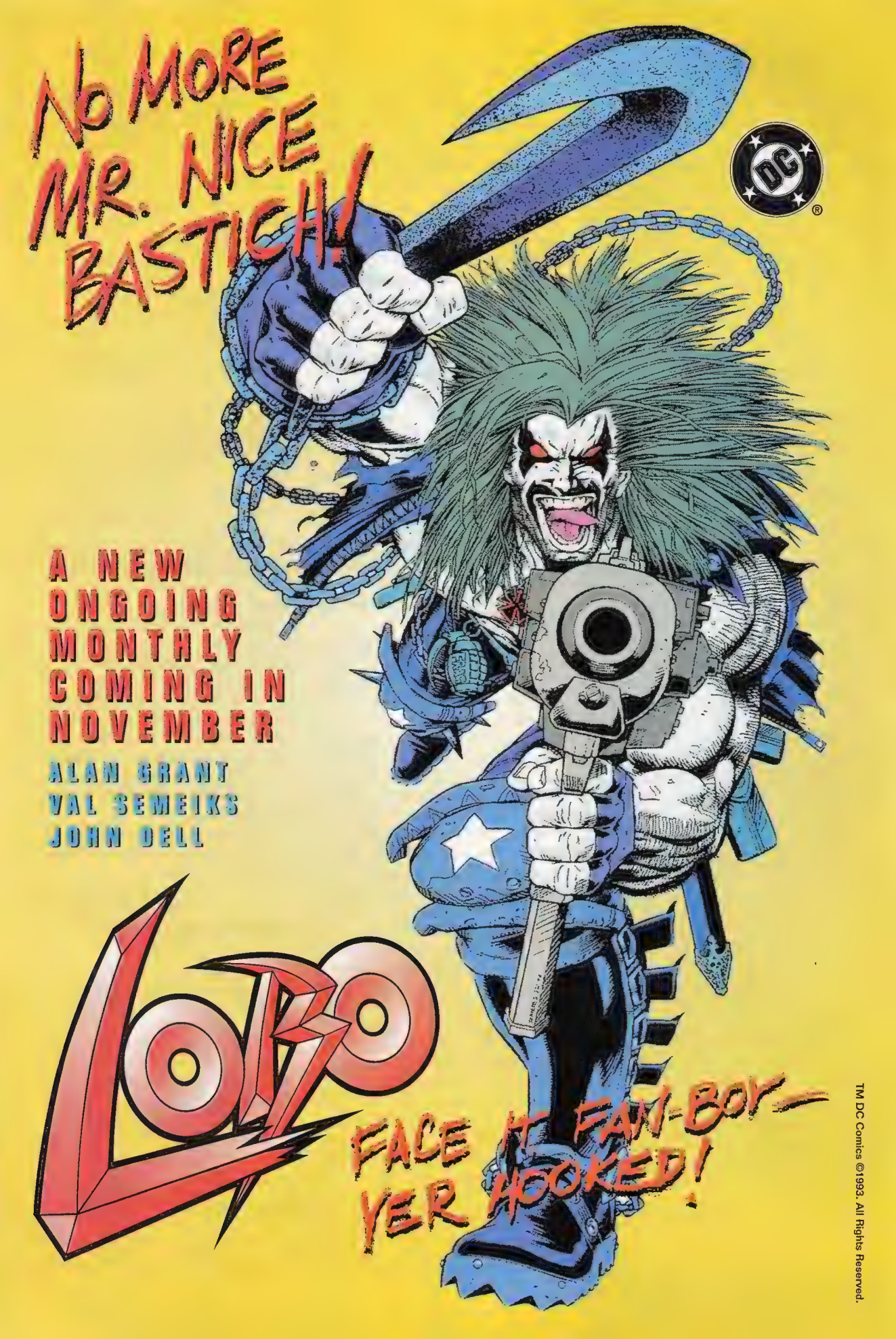
Likes: All Image, all Valiant, *Uncanny X-Men*

Benson Ray
Age: 16 Sex: M
10202 W. Reade Ave.
Glendale, Ariz 85307

Likes: *Sandman*, *X-Men*, *Shade the Changing Man*

Darren Milbrandt
Age: 18 Sex: M
261 Cranbrook Dr.
Saginaw, Mich. 48603

Likes: All Batman, *New Titans*, *Spawn*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Ask the WIZARD

Q: If Cyclops' eyes were pulled out, would he still be able to shoot his optic blasts?

–J. Chapman, Talladega, Ala.

A: *Probably not. They are called optic blasts, so if you pull his peepers out, he loses everything that creates/channels the energy that he shoots.*

Q: Are Geomantic traits inherited, or can anybody learn to be a Geomancer?

–A. Kehoe, Columbia, Tenn.

A: *They're not necessarily inherited, but it is a rare trait which allows one to be trained to be a Geomancer.*

Q: What are the powers of Crystal the Avenger, and what's that black stripe thingy in her hair?

–J. VanTreese, Rogse, Texas

A: *She can control the four basic elements of nature (earth, fire, air, and water). She can do stuff like make you black out from lack of oxygen, or cause an earthquake (!). Pretty powerful lady. As for what that black stripe thingy is, they have never really explained it. I assume it's some sort of decorative headdress.*

Q: Was Bedrock (or Badrock?) always rock-like? If so, then why doesn't his mother walk kind of funny from bearing him?

–Z. Gabriel, Moval, Calif.

A: *No, he was born human, but a young Billy Kinsey was transformed into Badrock during a visit to his father's lab.*

Q: When Colossus turns to metal, does everything—and I mean everything—turn to metal?

–K. DeLury, Fishers, Ind.

A: *Sure. Why do you think they call him Colossus?*

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

series, and a real classic!

Perhaps the people who frequent my store are less informed than those elsewhere, but I doubt it. I would like to challenge *Wizard* readers to educate themselves about the history of comic books, instead of only looking toward the future hot artist or story. There were great artists before Todd McFarlane. There were great stories before *Sandman*. Go take a more careful look through those back issue bins!

Wizard could help, too. Maybe it's time to start a regular feature in your magazine devoted to history—describing some of the artists, storytellers, and characters from the past.

Don Douglas
Alberta, Canada

Not a bad idea, but in the meantime, check out Good & Cheap on page 133 for a look at some great-readin' back issues at bargain-basement prices.

Dear Wizard,

Selling out.

No, I'm not talking about *Superman* #75, the *Plasm* #0 binder, or any other "hot" items that are sold out on the first day they're released. No, I'm talking about something much more serious.

I'm talking about *Wizard* magazine selling out.

I remember when I got my first issue, *Wizard* #9. I was amazed by the editorial content, the fantastic cover and poster, and, in general, the attitude that the *Wizard* staff had toward comics.

"Attitude?" you say. "What, pray tell, do you mean?" One example would be you guys saying, "And what about *Quasar*? Boy, does that comic suck!", which you didn't exactly say, but that was the kind of thing you said. I liked it. "Do these guys have a backbone!" I told myself. "They're not afraid to offend some people, criticize some companies, or just plain insult people! They say what they want!" I thought.

Then things...changed.

One person wrote in saying that kids buy this magazine, so be careful what you say. "Give me a break! Man, will *Wizard* rip into this person!" I thought. You can imagine my shock when instead you said, "Sorry.

"Sorry. It won't happen again. We forget sometimes. We apologize. From now on one we'll be nice, sensitive '90s guys. We'll change. Blah blah blah."

And it only got worse. "You exploit women!" "Sorry." "You insult the readers!" "Sorry." "You guys keep your opinions to yourself!" "Don't make fun of people!" "Sorry."

Now *Wizard* is becoming a, well, wussy magazine. You guys are becoming too politically correct, and any chance you get, you apologize. I notice you don't even say "damn" anymore. You guys say "darn," "crap," et cetera. And now you hardly have the guts to trash bad comics. Twenty dollars says we'll be seeing articles on how great *Sleepwalker* and *Quasar* are soon. You used to trash such comics.

Please, don't sell out. I liked this mag because it was fearless. Now you're afraid even to say "babe." It's your magazine, say what you want.

John Kantner
Wayne, MI

Sorry.

Dear Wizard,

What happens to the letters you don't publish?

Thanks.

Karina Perez
Union City, NJ

We rip them into long strips, add water and flour, and make papier-mâché *Plasm* binders.

Dear Wizard,

Just picked up *Wizard* #22 as a back issue (your magazine is addictive), and a letter from Andrew Kelem caught my eye. He was asking about a *Fantastic Four* Annual #3 with blank inside and back covers. Boy, does that bring back wonderful childhood memories from the early '60s.

Andrew, that was indeed an *FF* annual #3. But it's a Canadian edition.

As far as I know, only Marvel annuals had these covers.

Value-wise, I don't know. But memory-wise, it's priceless to this transplanted Canadian. Thanks, Andrew!

Peter Bosch
Hollywood, CA

Mystery solved. Thanks, Peter.

Dear Wizard,

In the *Deathmate* prologue they show Void with a shattered mirror of images. *WildC.A.T.s* #1 has this same picture and talks about converging timelines, so I was wondering if Jim Lee knew about *Deathmate* before *WildC.A.T.s* #1, and is this the first hint of *Deathmate*?

Justin Hanford
Raleigh, NC

Well, we asked Mr. Lee, and he said "...sort of. The

Gregory Butera Age: 15 Sex: M 1960 W. 13 St. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223 Likes: *Spawn, Venom, Batman*	Christine Eslao Age: 13 Sex: F 1503 North River Rd. Coventry, Conn. 06238 Likes: *Sandman, Enigma,* All Vertigo	Kirk Kraft Age: 26 Sex: M 8248 Spengler Dr. Sacramento, Calif. 95828 Likes: All Image, All Valiant, All X-Titles.	Maurice Eason Age: 28 Sex: M 4900 Madison Ave Newport News, Va. 23607 Likes: *X-Men, X-Force, Amazing Spider-Man*	Robert Morris Age: 17 Sex: M 106 High St. Washington, Mo. 63090 Likes: *Hulk, Thor,* All X-Titles	Travis Thornton Age: 16 Sex: M 213 Brookside Ln. Mars, Pa. 16046 Likes: *Spawn, The Maxx, Cyberforce*	Zach Grice Age: 9 Sex: M P.O. Box 564 Guymon, Okla. 73942 Likes: *Spawn, Ghost Rider, Venom*	Kerry Ellis Age: 8 Sex: M 624 Davis Curbow Rd. S.E. Oldfort, Tenn. 37362 Likes: *Darkhawk, Wizard, X-Men*

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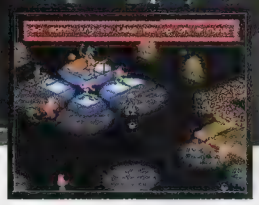

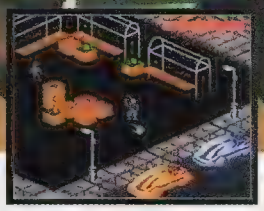

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— DieHard Game Fan, June 1993

"Shadowrun is the best reason to buy an SNES."
— Video Games & Computer Entertainment, May 1993

"Shadowrun could be Super Nintendo's best game yet. I literally couldn't put the controller down!"
— Game Informer, May/June 1993

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is the foundation of all philosophy.

—Montaigne

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force that destroyed Void sent shards of her essence or being throughout time. One such splinter of her psyche was sent into the nether-region/dimension, where she hooked up with Solar. It was this union that got Deathmate rolling." Ah.

Dear Wizard,

Shadowman #2 is the first real appearance of the H.A.R.D. Corps. I think this because 1) this team has four members, just like the original team, 2) one of the people in the team calls another member "sir," 3) they all have communicators which look the same as they do now, 4) they have high-tech gear on their head that looks a lot like the gear they wore in their early appearances, 5) they're after Shadowman, probably to check him for Harbinger powers.

Alex DeMaris
Champaign, IL

Nope. We asked Jon Hartz over at Valiant, and he said uh-uh, them ain't the H.A.R.D. Corps fellas. They're just hired goons.

Dear Wizard,

How could I even have a chance of winning *Wizard* Contest 26 if the entry deadline is August 19, 1993, and *Wizard* #26 didn't come out until August 25, 1993?

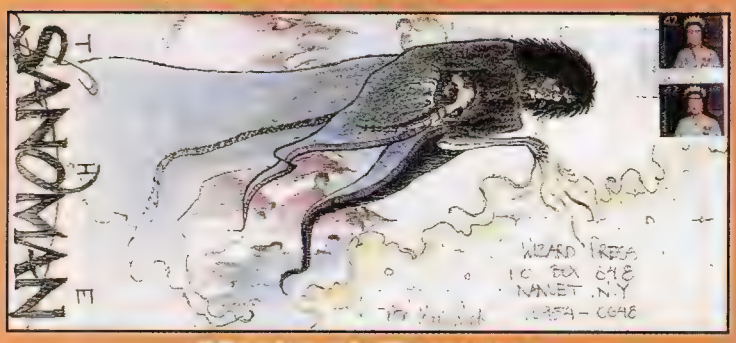
Evan Karp
Chelmsford, MA

Errr....that was a trademark *Wizard* typo. For everybody who picked up on that, know that the new deadline for *Wizard* #26's Spider-Man contest is

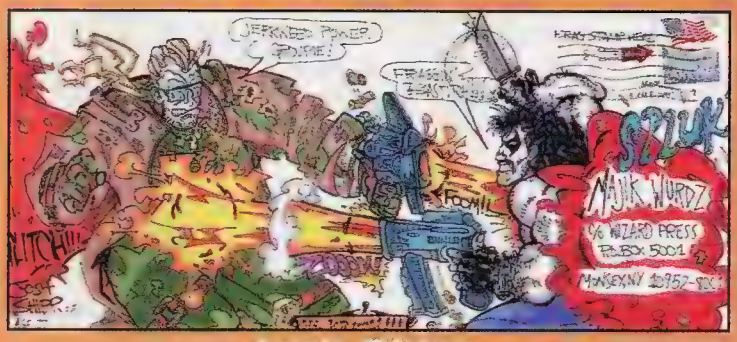
Enveloping LETTER ART!

When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and BOOM, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your letter gets printed, you'll become a household name, and you'll start dating the likes of Cindy Crawford or Billy Ray Cyrus (or, if you like, both). Fans who get their letter art printed receive the issue of *Wizard* their letter appeared in, signed by the *Wizard* creative staff, a nifty *Wizard* "Big Cheese" T-shirt, and a copy of the Gold *Rai & The Future Force* #9! The best envelope this month wins all that neat stuff, plus a copy of *The Adventures of Superman* #500, signed by Bogdanove, Breeding, Jurgens, Grummett and Guice! (Include a return address on the back of your envelope.)

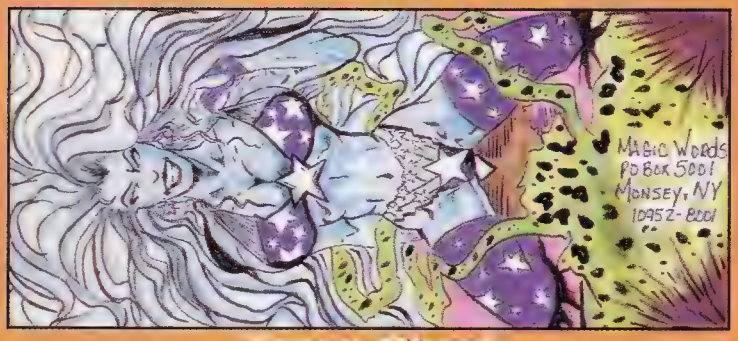
Frank Naters
Miami, Fla.



Michael Conway
Winnipeg, Canada



Josh Shipp
Memphis, Tenn.



Tracy Cherl
Alabaster, Ala.

November 30. We apologize for the mix-up.

Dear Wizard,

I don't know if anyone realized this, but Wolverine has a son—really! Remember *Wolverine: Jungle Adventure* with Apocalypse? Check out page 13, the bottom three panels with Wolverine and Gahck (that women from Savage Lands). Well, check out the results, last page, bottom panel.

"The Comic Book Collector"
Far Rockaway, NY

And how long before that kid is taken into the future, cloned, chopped up, put back together with stainless steel accouterments, and sent back to our time to kill his clone?

Dear Wizard,

I saw the ads for the August issue of *Shadowman* and all I can say is "Wow!" Finally, a company with vision. I cannot tell you how long I have waited for just such a story. Rock 'n' roll and comic books, each as a basic staple of American society as peanut butter and jelly. And *Aerosmith*, no less—such genius in a company so young!

But do not stop there! There are so many other things to do now that the barrier between rock and comics has been broken once again. I pray to god the damn wall stays down. Below are just a couple of my ideas for future stories:

X-O Manowar: While in Boston, Aric runs into the New Kids on the Block, whence he challenges Donnie—who is in my opinion the cutest guy on the block—to a dance-off. Well, things get a little ugly during the competition, but all is forgotten when they both team up against the New Kids' agent, who turns out to be... that's right, one of Master Darque's minions.

Harbinger: While fleeing Harada, Zeppelin and the rest of the crew run into a western bar in Texas, where they meet up with Billy Ray Cyrus in an issue that could only be called "Achy Breaky Harbinger." Hell, the issue practically writes itself.

S. Penelope Jones
Escondido, CA

Master Darque and Sinead O'Connor? Actually, the word from Valiant is that they will probably do more music/comic crossovers in the future.

And that's about it, boys and girls. Keep the letters comin', and I'll be back in 30 days to do it all again.
—Pat McCallum

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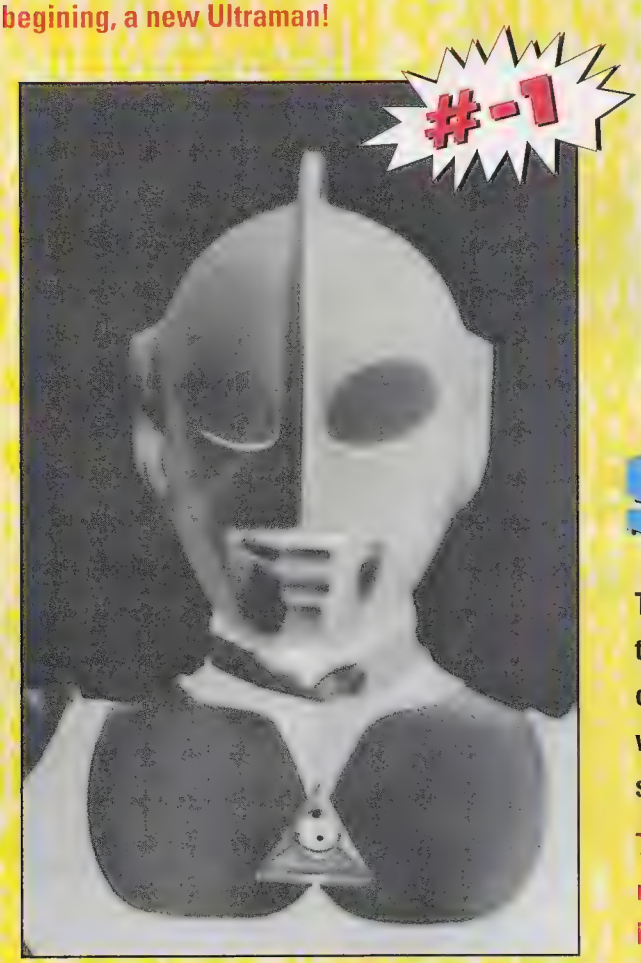

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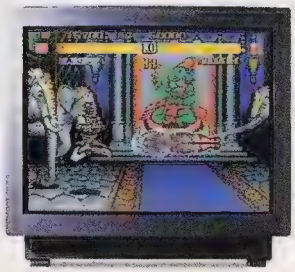

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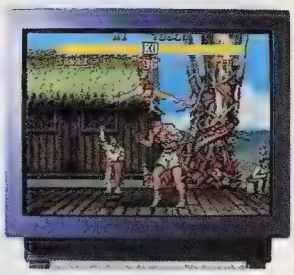

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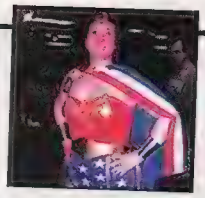
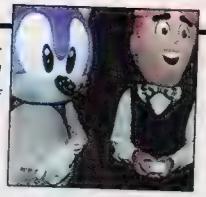
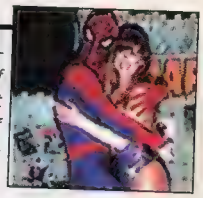


Linda Carter upset over failed revival of TV career. "One more kid looks at me funny and I'll cave his skull in," says disgruntled actress.



Disaster strikes convention when costumes fill with urine. "The Jaws of Life are on their way," says fire chief.



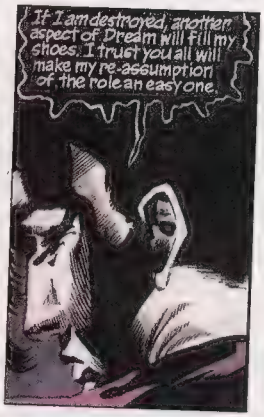
Spider-Man's wall-sticking powers run out of control at show. "It wouldn't be so bad if he'd bathed!" says disgusted Crystal.

Wizard News

Wizard #28, December 1993

Since 1990

The Death of Sandman?



™ & © 1993 DC Comics.

Will the Sandman be destroyed? Read "The Kindly Ones" starting in Sandman #57.

The end is near for Sandman: The critically acclaimed series will be ending sometime in late 1994. In the meantime, all eyes drift towards "The Kindly Ones," a seven-issue storyline beginning in *Sandman* #57 and shipping December 28. Written by Neil Gaiman and drawn by Marc Hempel (*Gregory*, *Breathtaker*), the story wraps up many of the plotlines that have been presented since the series began in *Sandman* #1. Key players in the drama include many characters from Morpheus' past, among them Lucifer, Lyta Hall, the Corinthian, and several others. DC is staying mum amid rumors that this story arc will depict the death of Morpheus, admitting only that the Sandman will definitely be changed by the events of "The Kindly Ones," and that it is "the final major story arc" of *Sandman*. Even DC house ads on the storyline read "Nothing is Endless." Gaiman says of the story, "It will be a tragedy, but an upbeat tragedy."

The story is tied to the *Sandman Special* #1, during which Morpheus' son Orpheus was torn apart—although his head was preserved intact—by the Furies. The title, "The Kindly Ones," is a euphemism for the Furies. According to Vertigo assistant editor Alisa Kwitney, "'Kindly Ones' is a direct consequence of Morpheus granting his son Orpheus a favor [in 'Brief Lives,' *Sandman* #41-#49]." After this storyline ends, Gaiman will do six or seven more issues of *Sandman* before the series concludes.

But Kwitney says there will be life after *Sandman*. Gaiman is currently planning to write several mini-series based on the other members of the Endless. Delirium will receive her own mini-series in mid-1994 with art by Jill Thompson, and Gaiman and artist Chris Bachalo will reunite for another Death mini-series in late '94. Even though Gaiman will be busy penning the exploits of the rest of the Endless, tales from the Sandman's own realm will not go unchronicled after the end of the *Sandman* series. DC plans to launch an anthology title, *The Dreaming*, sometime in 1994, which will feature *Sandman*-related stories scripted by a variety of writers.

—William A. Christensen & Mark Seifert

Image Goes Cosmic

In January, Image Comics is unveiling its Cosmic Images line of books, which focuses on adventures which take place off of Earth. "Earth is very crowded," says Kyle Zimmerman, Image's promotions director. "We've got a dozen superteams and organizations, and it's time we took to the stars and beyond to see what's out there."

Four books are set to launch the new line: *The Knight*, *Worlox*, *Weapon Zero*, and *Galactic Legion*. As these titles begin, a destructive force known as the Abyss is tearing apart the Milky Way—and heading towards Earth. A *Cosmic Images Prelude* will be out in January, which springboards the books and provides a map of the star systems of the Image Universe.

™ & © 1993 Top Cow Productions, Inc.

Art from the second Ripclaw mini-series by Raskin and Nowlan.

In February, Extreme Studios' *Knight* debuts as an ongoing series. (*The Knight* was a back-up story in *Bloodstrike* #2-#4.) This new series will spotlight Major Ironside as he and his team embark on a suicide mission against the Abyss. Rob Liefeld plots this book, with Eric Stephenson scripting and Chuck Jones penciling.

April will see a *Galactic Legion* one-shot by Jim Valentino and Keith Giffen. This series looks at the Image Universe 1,000 years in the future. Neither creator is a stranger to future stories, as Valentino successfully guided Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* and Giffen did the same with DC's *Legion of Super-Heroes*. An ongoing *Galactic Legion* series is due in late 1994.

No additional information is available on *Weapon Zero*, by Marc Silvestri and Greg Capullo, or *Worlox*.

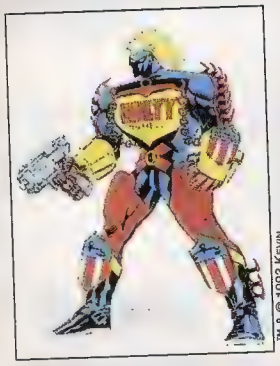
April will also herald the return from hiatus of the monthly *Youngblood*, *Brigade*, and *Bloodstrike* series. The new *Ripclaw* mini-series, penciled by Capullo, is also due in the spring, and will be followed by another *Ripclaw* mini-series, by Jordan Raskin and Kevin Nowlan, in the summer.

Image also says that, due to the success of its Extreme and Deathmate tours, it is planning a "rookie tour" promoting its young artists, as well as a tour for the founders of Image, for late '94.

Will readers see a death in the Image Universe to cap off all these other big events? Tony Lobito, Image publisher, says, "One thing we won't be doing is killing off any of our major characters. We don't need to."

Blackball Comics Debuts

Blackball Comics, a venture headed up by Atomeka publisher Dave Elliott, launches in December. Elliott has persuaded several top-name creators to join Blackball. As reported in *Wizard* #27,

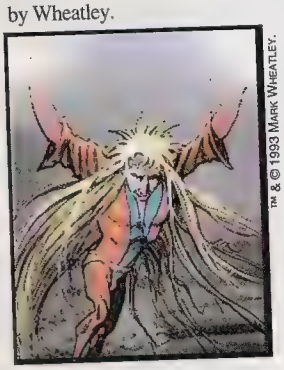


™ & © 1993 Kevin

A rough sketch of Kevin O'Neill's John Pain for Blackball Comics.

Keith Giffen's *Trencher* will be published by Blackball, along with the anthology book called *Monster Massacre*, which has stories by such creators as Alan Grant, Kevin O'Neill, Marc Wheatley, and others. Blackball's first releases will be Giffen's *Trencher Christmas Bites Holiday Blowout* special and a *Monster Massacre* special, both due in December. *Monster Massacre* will feature a wraparound Simon Bisley cover, James O'Barr's first full-color artwork, "John Pain" by Grant and O'Neill, and other stories.

Blackball's big push is in March, when *Trencher* #1 and *Monster Massacre* #1 debut as monthly titles. *Monster Massacre* #1 will feature a "Trencher" story by Giffen, an unnamed story by O'Neill, and "Radical Dreamer" by Wheatley.



™ & © 1993 Mark Wheatley.

Mark Wheatley's Radical Dreamer, also from Blackball Comics.

"Radical Dreamer" will spin off into its own series later in 1994. Its first issue will feature a brand-new format called "poster format," which will be, according to Wheatley, "the world's largest comic book page." The book, while standard comic book size, unfolds into poster size after the first six pages. Fret not, readers: Wheatley says there will be no staples holding the fold-out pages, so readers won't have to rip anything.

O'Neill also plans to spin off his "John Pain" storyline into a regular series with Grant. Elliott adds that Bisley will join Blackball, once he has fulfilled his commitments to Kitchen Sink Press, to do an as-yet-unnamed project. Elliott also says that all of Blackball's books will be colored by Digital Chameleon and will be printed and shipped by Ronalds, which prints many Image and Marvel books.

Elliott plans on dissolving Atomeka when all of its projects have found new publishers.

Ultraverse Breaks Through

Ultraverse's first crossover, *Break-Thru*, starts in December. The story, co-plotted by Mike W. Barr, Steve Englehart, Steve Gerber, James Hudnall, Gerard Jones, George Pérez, James Robinson, Len Strazewski, and Chris Ulm, is set up in *Exiles* #4, begins in the bookend *Break-Thru* #1, runs through all of the Ultraverse's December and January titles, and concludes in *Break-Thru* #2. Both 40-page bookends will feature a script by Jones, pencils by Pérez, and inks by John Lowe.

Jones says that, in the story, Amber (from *Exiles*) is imbued with cosmic powers based on the various frequencies of the radiation spectrum. The powers drive her, and, subsequently, the population of Earth, insane. The powers are emanating from the moon; what the heroes find there when they go to investigate becomes the thrust of *Break-Thru*.

Pérez is no stranger to gigantic crossovers. "I love drawing books with large all-star casts," says Pérez. "With *Crisis*, I got to draw all the characters in the DC Universe, and I did likewise with the Marvel characters with The *Infinity Gauntlet*. Now, I get to draw the entire Ultraverse." *Break-Thru* #1 carries a Pérez cover and costs $2.50.

From Bedrock to Badrock

When *Spawn* #13 hit the stands in early September, many fans noticed that guest-star Bedrock's name had been changed to Badrock. Even the copyright notice was changed to Badrock. Why is this? According to creator Rob Liefeld, "Big things are afoot for Badrock. Commercials, toy deals, animated series, and a host of opportunities. [The name was changed] just to preclude any legal problems."

What legal problems? Rumor had it that Hanna-Barbera had copyrighted the name "Bedrock" from *The Flintstones*, and asked Liefeld to change his character's name. According to Matt Hawkins, spokesperson of Extreme Studios, this is not true, and Liefeld was never contacted by Hanna-Barbera.

Penthouse Comix

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Penthouse Comix's "Young Captain Adventure" with art by Adam Hughes

A small comic section, entitled *Penthouse Comix*, debuts in the November issue of *Penthouse Magazine*. The first installment, "Young Captain Adventure," is by creator/writer George Caragonne, former apprentice of Jim Shooter, with art by Adam Hughes, who is lauded for his provocative renditions of the female form. Other *Penthouse Comix* pin-ups are by Archie Comics' Dan DeCarlo and *Punisher*'s Mike Harris.

"The whole idea was to create a comic that no one else has the guts to do," says Caragonne. "Every month, we're going to get someone really terrific to draw these things."

As for whether this and later issues of *Penthouse* will be available through the comic book direct market, Caragonne says that the direct market has resisted the notion, but that *Penthouse Comix* will be available in the direct market in March. When asked if he was afraid young children might come across *Penthouse Comix* in the direct market, Caragonne says no. "Retailers have experience dealing with this stuff," he says. "This is a softcore publication. We've got no interest in hardcore. *Penthouse Comix* is in good taste."

Hughes says, "I wouldn't do it if I didn't have a good time. It's a fairly witty satire of superhero comics. It's still an entertaining read without the sex. I'm not a big fan of nudity if it's just there for nudity; the story had its own merits and it's worth it."

Is Hughes afraid of being stereotyped by drawing only women? He says, "Yeah, but hey—if you're stereotyped and getting work, there's nothing wrong with it."

Advance response has been so good that a separate 96-page *Penthouse Comix* magazine will be released in March '94.

Star Benefit Calendar

This December, look for the 12-month Family of Woodstock Fantasy Benefit Calendar, illustrated by some of today's top comic artists, which will be available in comic book shops nationwide.

The project is headed up by writer/artist Jim Starlin (*Breed, Infinity Gauntlet*), who works for the Family of Woodstock organization in his spare time, answering hotline calls.

The contributing artists include John Byrne, Tom Grindberg, Jeffrey Jones, Mike Kaluta, Angel Medina, Mike Ploog, Tom Raney, Marc Silvestri, Walt Simonson, Starlin, Charles Vess, Barry Windsor-Smith, and Berni Wrightson. When asked how he managed to grab these top names, Starlin laughs, "It's amazing! I just called them up and asked."

The calendar, distributed by Defiant, will cost $9.95; all profits will go to Family of Woodstock, a New York state charity which provides shelters for abused and troubled children, abused women, and the homeless. They also maintain a free clothing store, soup

kitchens, counseling, and a 24-hour-a-day phone hotline.

"Hey, Buddy!" Hoax

In August, a false press release was circulated claiming that alternative comics giant Peter Bagge had severed his decades-long ties with Fantagraphics Books to self-publish under the name Hey, Buddy! Enterprises. Bagge is well-known for his comic *Hate,* published by Fantagraphics. It is unknown as to who started this fabrication.

Larry Reid, Fantagraphics' marketing director, debunks the elaborate hoax. "There is no truth to it whatsoever," says a perplexed Reid, who could only speculate on who might have done this.

The mock press release went on to say that, aside from *Hate,* Hey, Buddy! was planning on publishing Dan Clowes' *Eightball* and the Hernandez brothers' *Love & Rockets,* which, along with *Hate,* are Fantagraphics' best-selling titles. The phony phone number listed for Hey, Buddy! Enterprises was, in fact, that of a laundromat in Washington state.

Along with many fans, Capital City's *Advance Comics* was also fooled by the press release; it "Hot Flashed" a nonexistent Hey, Buddy! book known as *Street Trash* #1 in its November issue.

Bagge himself is confused about the whole situation. "I don't know who did this, but it has caused me a little bit of embarrassment," Bagge says. "I tried self-publishing 10 years ago, and I swore I'd never do it again."

Bagge says his relationship with Fantagraphics is very comfortable, and that he feels it's in his best interest to stay with the publisher.

Image Axes Shaman's Tears #3

When Image Comics dropped *Shaman's Tears* from its regular line-up, it said, barring lateness, that it would publish the title up to issue #5. Kyle Zimmerman, Image's promotions manager, says that *Shaman's Tears* #3 was late in its production and was canceled, as promised. Instead, #3 made its debut at the October Motor City Convention as an ashcan, and will be published in comic form at a later date.

According to *Shaman's Tears* editor Mike Gold, the book was four pages short of being fully colored when Hurricane Emily wrecked the home of colorist Julia Lacquement. The delay, according to Gold, would have postponed the release of #3 by one week. "It's unusual that Image would cancel a book that [was delayed] only one week," Gold says.

Creator Mike Grell and Gold are close to finding a new publisher for *Shaman's Tears.* Gold also says that work on other Grell books, namely *Bar Sinister* and a Jon Sable/Maggie the Cat series, have begun, and will also be released when a new publisher is found.

Byrne Inks Elfquest

"Legend" John Byrne is inking Wendy Pini's pencils in *Elfquest: The Hidden Years* #9.5, debuting in mid-November from Warp Graphics. The story, entitled "Rogue's Challenge," is described as "a knockdown, drag-out fight between main men Cutter and Rayek." Readers will recall that both characters can barely tolerate each other to begin with. Will they settle their differences? Read this baby and find out!

Byrne, an unabashed fan of *Elfquest,* says he did the issue because Pini's work intrigues him. "I'm a big fan of Wendy's. Her style is so different from mine," Byrne says. "I did it for a) fun, and b) a learning experience."

This special issue also marks the return of multi-issue epic storylines that made *Elfquest* the sensation it is today.

Megaton Returns

Megaton, the comic which featured the first Youngblood, Savage Dragon, and Vanguard appearances, is returning this December in Entity Comics' *Megaton Christmas Special* #1. It has an all-new introduction by Rob Liefeld, a Vanguard Christmas story, and a rare 1987 vintage Youngblood centerspread by Liefeld and Jerry Ordway.

™ & © Gary Carlson and Erik Larsen.

Look for Entity's Megaton Christmas Special *#1 in December.*

Entity publisher Don Chin says that some of the material in this special was originally slated for the never-published *Megaton* #9. "As a special Christmas bonus, we will be publishing a full-color Megaton gallery featuring art by Erik Larsen, S. Clarke Hawbaker, Angel Medina, Frank Fosco, Keith Pollard, and Jackson Guice, among others, and a polybagged Megaton trading card by Kelley Jones," he says.

The *Megaton Christmas Special* #1 will sport a new foil-stamped cover by Hawbaker, and will cost $2.95.

Hildebrandts Seek Sanctuary

Tim and Greg Hildebrandt, mega-star brothers in the fantasy art world, are collaborating for the first time in 13 years, on painted covers and interior pencils for the first three issues of Sanctuary Press' *Xenya,* Sanctuary's first title, to be released in December. (Greg recently painted the cover to DC's *The Spectre* #11.)

™ & ©

Tim & Greg Hildebrandt collaborate again on Sanctuary's Xenya.

Xenya is a bimonthly color series containing three separate short stories about a powerful witch who is summoned to different time eras. One story will be co-penciled by the Hildebrandts, one by Louis Small (*Vampirella*), and one by Richard Kane Ferguson (*Cry For Dawn*).

The husband and wife team of Stephen and Beatriz Henel, Sanctuary's publishers, are writing the book. Stephen says that *Xenya* will appeal to fans who enjoy reading Vertigo's *Sandman* and *Hellblazer.* "We see Sanctuary books as an alternative line with mainstream appeal," he says.

Xenya #1 costs $2.95 and is about 36 pages. For more information on Sanctuary, write: P.O. Box 4144, Highland Park, NJ 08904.

Disney Gets Boned

Bone has been receiving its fair share of critical acclaim recently, and it seems that Disney has taken notice of this book. Jeff Smith's *Bone* will now be gracing the pages of *Disney Adventure Digest* for three issues, starting in March. The magazine will carry eight pages of *Bone* #1, in full color for the first time, in each issue. Smith will also be providing new splash pages leading into the story. This is a major boon for *Bone,* since the Disney digest has a circulation of over 1,000,000 per issue. Smith says that a future Bone project in conjunction with Disney seems likely.

—William A. Christensen & Mark Seifert

EC Comics Reunion

Karl Arts Publishing has announced that it is planning on publishing a comic with all-new material by a host of former EC Comics artists sometime in 1994. It is unknown at the present time as to who is involved in the project.

Guy Gardner Gets Codename

In December, Guy Gardner will get a real superhero name in a two-part tale. In *Guy Gardner* #16, the protagonist will be called Warrior; the book's title will be forever altered to *Guy Gardner, Warrior* with issue #17. Explaining why this change is being made, editor Kevin Dooley says, "If you're a kid and see a book called *Guy Gardner,* you say, 'It could be about a guy in botany…' It's a title that doesn't really excite."

Dooley also says that 'Warrior' was one of many prospective names. "Surprisingly, there's no character named 'Warrior,'" Dooley says.

Aliens vs. Predator Toys

In the letters page of Dark Horse's *Predator: Race War* #2, editor Jerry Prosser says that Kenner will be releasing a series of Aliens vs. Predator figures in early 1994. Kenner has neither confirmed nor denied this announcement.

Death Gallery Exhibit

Four Color Images, a comic art gallery in New York City, will be displaying a "Death Gallery" exhibit from October 27 to November 27. This exhibit will have all of the original art from Vertigo's *Death Gallery* book, as well as color renditions by Danny Vozzo and Lovern Kindzierski. For more information, call (212) 431-4234.

Marvel's Marvels

November brings a promising project from Marvel Comics called *Marvels,* a fully-painted four-issue mini-series which shows readers a normal man's view of significant events in the history of the Marvel Universe. *Marvels* was the brainchild of collaborators writer Kurt Busiek and artist Alex Ross, and chronicles the historic events from the viewpoint of Phil Sheldon, a photojournalist for the Daily Bugle.

Busiek says he and Ross originally planned to do a story that showed Marvel characters from a different viewpoint; after some editorial assistance from Tom DeFalco, it was agreed upon that the two would focus on pre-existing events. Busiek says that they strove to "stay as close as possible to actual Marvel history."

Look for the Galactus Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon in Marvels *#3.*

Marvels #1 will focus on Captain America, Namor, and The Human Torch, and their exploits in World War II while fighting the Nazis. We'll also get to see Fantastic Four mailman Willie Lumpkin in his WW II days. #2 will cover a multitude of events, from the first days of the Avengers to Sue Storm and Reed Richards' wedding day, to the day the Sentinels touched down on Earth, creating today's anti-mutant hysteria. In #3, we'll get to see the day Galactus came to Earth, and how everyday people dealt with the Earth being on the edge of destruction. Phil Sheldon's camera will not only show us Galactus, but will also demonstrate his immense size compared to the Silver Surfer and the Fantastic Four.

An interesting side note to this issue is that, as a tribute, Alex Ross used pictures of Jack Kirby as his reference when painting the face of the Thing. Ross adds, "You can't tell, but the entire time I was painting the Thing, I was thinking 'Jack Kirby'… When it's transformed, everything's lost, but you can tell it was heavily upon my mind." The final issue is basically a Spider-Man tour de force, but we'll also get glimpses of the Kree/Skrull War, the trial of the Black Widow, and the debut of Luke Cage. The main thrust deals with the Spider-Man/Green Goblin/Gwen Stacy saga, which is wrapped up with a view of what was perhaps Marvel's darkest hour—the death of Gwen Stacy.

As if all of this wasn't enough, a sequel has already been approved. Busiek says it will still involve Phil Sheldon, but will also surround the views of two other "regular people": two brothers, one a cop, the other a petty criminal. "The second series will focus on a darker [more] criminal element of the Marvel Universe," Busiek says. "The series starts with the introduction of the Punisher and ends with the first appearance of the new Ghost Rider. In between you'll see the Hulk, Wolverine, Dark Phoenix, the Daredevil/Kingpin/Bullseye/Elektra affair, and a whole lot more, as if you were actually there as these events happened."

The sequel will be painted by Tristan Schane, known for his work on the recent Razorline poster for Clive Barker's new line of comics.

Marvels is as if it's shaping up to be one of the bigger hits of the winter season. Prepare to see the pivotal events in the formation of today's Marvel Universe as if you were right there watching!

—Rob Samsel

Company Updates

AC Comics

The actresses for the Femforce film have been chosen: Sharon Blair (*The Karate Kid*) will star as Synn and Julie Michaels (*Beethoven's 2nd*) will play Rayda.

The Ms. Victory "Femfog" pog was recently rejected by a non-sports card publication for being too "risqué" to be included with the magazine. AC is determined to release the "Femfog" in *Paragon: Dark Delusions* #1, due out in February.

Adhesive Comics

The Eden Matrix will debut in January, as well as Shannon Wheeler's *Too Much Coffee Man* #2. *The Eden Matrix* is described as a sci-fi/adventure series that will be computer-painted by Martin Thomas. Adhesive will also produce a line of action/horror comics in 1994.

Archie Comics

Archie's Christmas Stocking #1 will be released in November. The 48-page book features a pull-out poster insert and an airbrushed cover by veterans Dan DeCarlo and Rex Lindsey. It costs $2.

Aria Press

A Distant Soil Sketchbook, appearing in November, has become a four-issue quarterly series. #2 will ship in February. In January, Aria will release *A Distant Soil Starter Pack,* which includes the recent printings of issues #1-3. The regular version, which costs $5.95, will have a signed limited color print by Colleen Doran, and the deluxe version ($20) will come with a signed character sketch by Doran.

Caliber Press

Due to the difficulty of obtaining Caliber's books, the publisher will release introductory packs of three comics for only $.99. "The purpose here is to expose people to specific titles, rather than to try and move old backstock," says Caliber publisher Gary Reed. The three-issue *Stratosfear,* by British creators Paul Birch, Shane Oakley, and Gary Crutchley, starts this December.

Look for Evil Ernie *#0 with this great Greg Capullo cover art.*

Chaos! Comics

Evil Ernie #0, with a cover by Greg Capullo, in which the character takes over New York, premieres this December. *Lady Death: The Reckoning* #1 (of 3), by Brian Pulido and Steven Hughes, is set for January. The issue features a chromium cover by Hughes and begins the story of Lady Death's mysterious past.

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CONTINUITY
Todd McFarlne has canceled the Spawn/Valeria crossover for *Valeria the She-Bat* #3-4 due to lateness and the fact that he wants no Spawn-related product out during his upcoming Spawn/Batman cross-over. Continuity will not publish those issues and will jump directly to *Valeria* #5.

DAGGER COMICS
A 40-page *Dagger Comics* #0 will be released in early '94; it will feature a story entitled "When It All Began." This special issue will be available by redeeming coupons from the first six issues of the following: *Team Anarchy, Scorpion Corps,* and *The Mavericks.*

DARK HORSE COMICS
The title of *Vortex* has been changed to *Out of the Vortex* due to copyright conflicts, says an inside source. The series' writer, John Ostrander, leaves the book after issue #3 due to scheduling problems. Neal Barrett Jr. will take over beginning with #4. #5 will be guest-penciled by Pete McDonnell.

The Mask's Doug Mahnke has replaced Rick Leonardi as penciler of *X*. Leonardi says scheduling problems forced him to leave. *X* #1 ships in January.

The monthly *Catalyst* series, starting in February, will be written by Eddie Campbell and Peter Ford, with Tim Hamilton penciling; Jason Pearson does the covers. April's *Barb Wire* series will be written by John Arcudi, with art by Lee Moder and Andé Parks. Cover art will be supplied by *The Dirty Pair*'s Adam Warren.

Throughout 1994, specials on each city of Comics' Greatest World will be released. The *Ghost* special, written by Eric Luke and penciled by newcomer Matt Haley, has a cover by Adam Hughes. The *Titan* special will be written by Campbell and Ford, with a cover by Bart Sears. The *Motorhead* special will be written by Arcudi, and drawn by newcomer Dan Norton. A *Vortex* special is in the works, pending reaction from the mini-series.

DARK VISIONS PUBLISHING
Dark Visions Publishing Presents #3 and *Alphabet,* a new title, will ship in late November. *Dark Visions Publishing Presents* #4, shipping in February, has a Joe Linsner (*Cry For Dawn*) cover and a Brian Stelfreeze pin-up. All profits from *DVPP* #1-6 go towards AIDS research.

DC COMICS
Adam Hughes is helping out Chris Sprouse on the penciling of each month's *Legionnaires.* Hughes penciled #7 of the title and enjoyed it enough to stick around indefinitely.

In December, DC will reprint its AIDS awareness story by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean from *Sandman* #46, *Shade* #32, and *Hellblazer* #62 in a free eight-page format. In this educational story, Death offers information about how to take precautions against AIDS.

DEFIANT
Joe James, formerly Denys Cowan's assistant, is replacing Joe Phillips as penciler of *Dark Dominion.* Artist Adam Pollina, well known for his work on Triumphant's *Chromium Man,* will draw *Charlemagne.*

ECLIPSE
The new monthly *Miracle-*

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WIZARD LOOKS BACK...

The Lives & Deaths of the Sandman

Though he's seen many different incarnations, there's almost always been a Sandman in the DC Universe. The original Sandman first appeared in April 1939 in New York World's Fair 1939. Strongly influenced by the pulp comics of the time, the stories featured wealthy socialite Wesley Dodds, who became a crimefighter at night, defeating criminals with liberal doses of his fists and sleeping gas. He has been published occasionally, recently returning in *Sandman Mystery Theatre.*

The Sandman's second incarnation, Dr. Garrett Sanford, learned how to enter and monitor the "dream world" (known today as the Dreaming, the dimension wherein all dreams take place) and took it upon himself to fight evil there. This Sandman's adventures were chronicled in the mid-'70s, and introduced several characters familiar to readers of the current *Sandman* series, the most prominent of whom are Brute and Glob, who assisted Sanford on his adventures. Sanford was eventually killed by the stress of existing in the Dreaming.

The third Sandman began his superhero career as the Silver Scarab, a.k.a. Hector Hall. He and his girlfriend, Lyta, were members of Infinity Inc. before they entered the Dreaming. Ignoring the complications of multiple Earths and *Crisis on Infinite Earths* for the moment, Hector is the son of the Golden Age Hawkman and Hawkgirl, and Lyta is the daughter of the Golden Age Wonder Woman and Steve Trevor. While he was in the real world, Hector was possessed by the spirit of Setekh, an Asiatic version of the Egyptian god Set, and became evil (in *Infinity Inc.* #42, 1987).

The evil Hector's downfall was the conception of his and Lyta's son. As long as that unborn part of him remained inside Lyta, Setekh was unable to shed the last vestige of Hector's humanity. Nevertheless, he remained predominantly evil, and the rest of Infinity Inc. was forced to destroy him in *Infinity Inc.* #44 (1987). In *Infinity Inc.* #50 (1988), it was revealed that, at the moment of his body's destruction, Hector's essence was drawn to the Dreaming by Brute and Glob. They transferred his consciousness into Garrett Sanford's soulless body and transformed him into the Sandman, complete with the ability to project himself into the real world one hour each day. Hector transported Lyta back to the Dreaming with him after he learned of their unborn child.

Morpheus' first visit to the child Daniel in Sandman *#22.*

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This child—son of an Asiatic god and grandson of an Amazon—seems to be very important to the current Sandman. At the end of "The Doll's House" (*Sandman* #8-#16, 1989-90), Morpheus—the Neil Gaiman version of the Sandman—liberates Hector and Lyta from the Dreaming, sends Hector to take his place among the dead, and tells Lyta that he will come to claim the child someday. In Sandman #22 (1991), Morpheus visits the child and tells Lyta that its name is Daniel.

According to DC, Daniel will figure heavily in the upcoming story "The Kindly Ones" (beginning in *Sandman* #57—see lead news story). Will the child Daniel replace Morpheus and become the new Sandman? DC isn't saying, but you can bet that the answer will be interesting.

—William A. Christensen & Mark Seifert

man Triumphant series by Fred Burke and Mike Deodato premieres in January. March will see *Aviator X: The New Adventures of Airboy,* written by Chuck Dixon; no art team has been decided upon yet. In this title, Airboy is older, has a new costume, and has new problems. The new three-issue *Black Terror* mini-series, co-written by Dixon and Beau Smith, will take off from where the first series ended.

HERO COMICS

Hero is resoliciting *League of Champions* #13 for January. This issue features new penciler Mark Evans. #14 and #15 will be released on a bimonthly basis afterward.

IMAGE COMICS

According to Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio's *WetWorks* is almost two-thirds completed. The shipping schedule of *WetWorks* will prohibit Portacio from joining the founding members' tour in 1994. Rick Leonardi will be guest-penciling *Vanguard* #4.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Kitchen Sink is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 1994 by releasing an important Kitchen Sink reprint each month, among them *Omaha* #0 and *Death Rattle* #8 (the first appearance of *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs*). T-shirts will be released each month of 1994; January's shirt will feature Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics.* January will also see the release of Kevin Eastman and Simon Bisley's *Project X.*

LIGHTNING COMICS

Dell Barras (artist for Marvel U.K.) is drawing December's *Perg* #3 and 1994's *The Dreadwolf,* due in the spring. The new team of writer Steve Zyskowski and penciler Terral Lawrence begins their run on *Bloodfire* with issue #6 in November. In *Bloodfire* #8, readers discover the truth about Bloodfire's H.I.V.-related origin. November's *Judgment Day* #3 debuts penciler Eric Pence.

MAJESTIC ENTERTAINMENT

Majestic is releasing *S.T.A.T.* #1 in November, the *Heroes Like Us* #0 card set in January, and the *Flashpoint* #0 card set in February/March. *S.T.A.T.* is written by Fred Schiller, penciled by Phil Hester, and inked by Dan Schaeffer. *Heroes Like Us* is written by Schiller and penciled by Dan Lawlis. *Flashpoint* is written by Jim Higgins, penciled by Jamal Igle, and inked by Schaeffer. All books are colored by Paul Mounts.

MALIBU COMICS

Malibu has named its creator-owned line Bravura. The first of this line will be Jim Starlin's *'Breed,* debuting in January. January is also Ultraverse's "Origins Month," wherein each book will have a two-page origin story of a different character. Big-name artists will handle the stories.

MARVEL COMICS

A major change in the Spider-Man universe begins in the February issue of *Amazing Spider-Man* when the secret of Peter Parker's parents is revealed. It may result in Peter giving up his Peter Parker persona and perhaps changing his costume. All this and more will transpire over the course of an 18-month storyline. In other Spider-news, the Black Cat will receive her own mini-series, tentatively slated for February.

There have been rumors saying that Captain America, Thor, and Storm will die. Marvel spokesperson Gary Guzzo denies the rumors, but says that a major Marvel character, one with his or her own book, will be dying within the next few months. In order to preserve the mystery the book has been solicited beyond the death issue, even though the series will end with the protagonist's demise. Perhaps significantly, *Quasar* and *Alpha Flight* are on the '94 cancellation list, and Darkhawk is rumored to be next.

Northstar will get his own mini-series immediately after the last issue of *Alpha Flight.* There have also been rumors that characters such as Elektra and Bishop will get their own series, but Guzzo again denies them. "I would imagine [that Bishop] would [get a series] at some point, but it's not in the works," Guzzo says.

Marvel has reported that it is publishing a Beavis and Butthead series in January. No creative team has been selected.

MILESTONE MEDIA

Milestone has announced that all of its titles are in development for a TV or movie deal. On that note, Paramount Pictures is making a movie based on Denys Cowan and Jim Owsley's The Shade. *The Shade* will star Eddie Murphy as an urban vigilante. Milestone will do the comic adaptation of the 1994 film. Milestone is also starting a retail poster program; the first will done by Moebius. Additionally, a number of new mini-series will debut in '94.

REVOLUTIONARY COMICS

The KISS hardcover announced in *Wizard* #27 is a go; and there will be limited copies signed by the band as well as a CD insert featuring rare tracks. Look for it in spring 1994. An adaptation of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* is being painted by Dærick Gröss for '94. It's based upon an unshot screenplay which has a different ending.

RIP OFF PRESS

The material of satirical cartoonist Dan O'Neill will be compiled in a new series, *O'Neill,* starting in January. The first bimonthly reprints of *Post Brothers,* starting with #1, will also appear that month. Grass Green's *Up from the Ghetto* graphic novel, loosely described as "an African-American version of *Maus,*" ships in January. *Savage Henry* will also be reprinted from its first issue onward, starting in February.

SKY COMICS

Sky Comics is releasing three color titles in November and December. The first book is *Seeker: Vengeance,* slated for November, by Joe Martin, Willie Peppers (*Southern Knights*), and Allen Freeman (*Speed Racer*). The second, *Blood and Roses: Future Past Tense,* also due in November, is by Bob Hickey and Brad Gorby (*Parts Unknown*). Dead Kid, written by Tom and Mary Bierbaum (*Legionnaires*), with art by Joe Corroney and Bill Nichols, is scheduled for December.

The cover to Seeker: Vengeance *#1, shipping in November from Sky Comics.*

TOPPS COMICS

New Visions: The Art of Star Wars Galaxy, a large format trade paperback showcasing artwork originally featured in the card set, is shipping in early November. this one goes for $19.95. *Zorro* #0, by Don McGregor and Mike Mayhew, ships in December. This special 16-pager is said to "change forever the way you look at Zorro." The cover is by Brian Stelfreeze.

TRIUMPHANT

The first of many two-issue "Violent Past" mini-series delving into the backgrounds of various Triumphant characters ships in January. The first is *Chromium Man: The Violent Past.* Upcoming "Violent Past" mini-series will be about Riot Gear, Ximos from *Scavengers,* and Prince Vandal.

VALIANT

Valiant is releasing a trade paperback entitled *The Valiant Era: Volume* 1, which collects six of the rarest Valiant books, this December. The paperback will include reprints of *Magnus, Robot Fighter* #12 (first Valiant appearance of Turok), *Shadowman* #8 (first Master Darque), *Solar* #10 and #11 (first Eternal Warrior), and *Eternal Warrior* #4 and #5 (first full Bloodshot). The book also contains an eight-page comic entitled *The Valiant Era Special Edition,* which features the untold story of the events which led up to *Solar* #10 and #11.

Due in February is *Solar* #0, a 56-page comic which reprints "Alpha and Omega," the back-up story that ran through *Solar* #1-#10. Included is a poster of the final panel, heralded as "the largest comic book panel in history."

VISUAL ASSAULT COMICS

Visual Assault Comics Omnibus #1 ships in November from this new publisher. *V.A.C. Omnibus* is a black-and-white anthology title that includes gallery pages by amateur artists, as well as neat coloring and scripting contests. Amateur artists, writers, colorists, and letterers are encouraged to submit works to: Visual Assault Comics, 2402 Bronx Park East, Bronx, NY 10467.

Dear Readers

In response to your dissatisfaction with overpriced foil and gimmick covers flooding the market place, Marc Silvestri has decided to release CODENAME:STRYKEFORCE #1 in December with a $1.95 cover price and without any gimmicky cover enhancement -just a great looking cover by Brandon Peterson and Marc Silvestri. Thanks for hanging with us!

image™

HEADING YOUR WAY IN DECEMBER, 1993

BLOODBOW ™
TEMPEST ™
BLACK ANVIL ™
KILL RAZOR ™
CODENAME: STRYKE FORCE

Created & Written by Marc Silvestri
Art by Brandon Peterson

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SPEAK UP!

Every month, *Wizard* sits down a handful of comic fans, and asks them questions regarding the hot topics in today's market. Be it censorship, creator ownership, or the quality of today's comics, the most important part of the comic industry, the fans, speak their minds. This month, *Wizard* speaks to29-year-old Bruce Carpenter and 25-year-old Mike Anderson, both of Champaign, Ill. *Wizard* is represented by William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert.

COMIC ECONOMICS

Wizard: As we concluded last month (see Speak Up! "Gimmick Covers: Bonus or Bogus?", *Wizard* #27), gimmick covers are here to stay. And so are Prestige Format books. And so are many, many more publishers, putting out many, many more books than ever before. Back issues don't seem to be getting any cheaper, either. Faced with such mounting costs, how does even an enthusiastic collector keep up with it all? Retailers and experienced collectors have seen many new comic converts burn brightly, and then burn out quickly when they couldn't balance their buying habits against their bank accounts. This month's Speak Up! tackles the tough topic of collecting on a budget. How do you choose from a seemingly unlimited amount of cool comics with a limited amount of money?

Bruce: I'm very oriented to the interiors, so I will not buy a comic just for its cover, or for a gimmick on the cover. I don't mind paying a little extra for a first issue if it has a really nice cover; if I like the insides. But I won't continue to pay a high price on a regular basis. I hate to get started on a book and then have to drop it because of price or because the book is inferior. In fact, I usually wait until the book has been out a while, so I can take a look at the later issues and then go back and pick up the first issues. It is often more expensive that way if it is a hot book, but, on the other hand, I've saved money by not buying a lot of stuff that I would have ended up dropping anyway.

Wizard: So if the book has a proven track record or a proven creative team, then the price really isn't that important to you?

Bruce: That's right. For example, if there is Richard Corben interior art, it doesn't matter what the price is. I don't care. If it's Frank Miller or Neil Gaiman, I don't care.

Wizard: As far as regular series go, if something is priced at $1.75 versus $2.95, what makes the difference between following a series regularly and skipping it?

Bruce: That is a hard question, because there is a certain amount of loyalty that you develop if you are getting a series. I have picked up and dropped *Batman* several times. It is a gut reaction...you feel you are not getting your money's worth issue after issue. I'm willing to stay with a book for a couple of issues if I don't like it, but if a book continually doesn't interest me, then I start looking at the price and say, "This is not worth it anymore."

Mike: A lot of the times when I buy a book, I get really frustrated that I only want the story, yet certain companies will put fancy-cover-only versions of their books out, so I end up having to pay an extra $1.75 for this fancy little thing that I don't particularly want. They don't give you the option to buy a lesser-priced book. Some publishers *are* putting out two versions of their books, and I think that is really good.

Bruce: There are certain creators that I follow around from project to project. That has not always been the case. I used to be title-driven.

Wizard: Why are you no longer making buying decisions based on titles?

Bruce: After my favorite creative team has left and went somewhere else, I'm faced with a decision... should I continue on with this title, with a team that I'm not as enthused about, whose writing I don't enjoy? The answer is yes. Because I was into Batman, I read a Batman story no matter who wrote and drew it. But then I started realizing that I wasn't enjoying them anymore. I looked back at why I enjoyed certain Batman stories and not others, and it was who was doing it. I guess that is what fueled the transition for me. I started seeking out stories that they had done elsewhere. I was reading *Doom Patrol* when Grant Morrison was on it, and then when Morrison left, I stayed on for about five issues, and now I no longer read *Doom Patrol,* because the story just didn't grab me. *Animal Man* went through a similar slump. I read *Animal Man,* and they had quite a few teams come and go on that. They are pretty stable now, and I find I'm enjoying it again, so I'm glad I followed it through the slumps. Of all the buying decisions I have made in my life, the ones that I have regretted the most are the ones when I didn't buy something that I really wanted.

Mike: I haven't been collecting too long. I look back on the collecting that I have done, and I realized that

a lot of the money that I spent because I was just getting into it has been spent mostly on dreck. At the time I thought it was cool, and it was touted [as being] cool. In actuality, I find that the way they are presenting the stories–by dragging it out, and with the delays between one issue and another, and with the fact that they have an explosion of titles and titles that revolve around those titles–they made it too impossible to figure out what the hell was going on in any of the stories. A lot of my collection is like that. I don't even know what to read in some of these titles. I don't know the characters, because you get a whole two-page spread that shows one piece of art. You don't get too much story with that.

Wizard: So how about some of the other superhero publishers?

Mike: To jump into a whole new universe is going to cost a considerable amount of money, to get all the interconnected titles. I may pick up a few Ultraverse books when Barry Windsor-Smith is doing *Rune*. I like his work, so I am going to get that when it comes out. But to get all the other titles, I'd have to divert funds from titles that I already enjoy.

Bruce: They have all these crossovers that make it very difficult to follow the characters. I feel cheated when I have to go out and buy these other books just to read the characters who I enjoy.

Wizard: So what suffers the most in a time where money is sort of tight and there is a lot of product out there?

Bruce: At this particular stage, I am trying to cut down on the amount of money I spend. Once you start thinking budget, then you have got to start prioritizing books, and once you start doing that, it makes it very difficult to pick up a new book. So I'm paring down all of the titles to the ones that I really get the most enjoyment out of. That, in itself, is going to prevent me from really picking up further books, so I'm going to be much more reluctant to spend $2.95 on a book instead of $1.50.

Mike: Yes, because of future cost of keeping up with the series.

Wizard: Are you more willing to spend extra money on a limited series, something that you know is going to be finite?

Bruce: Yes, you count in the future costs. If a series is $2.95 and continues on into the future, that is one thing. But even if the series is $4.95 and in Prestige Format, but there are only four books, you know how much you are going to be spending on this series. You can anticipate that and you can commit to it much easier.

Wizard: Here's another example: *Hulk: Future Imperfect* from Marvel. It featured a hot creative team with Peter David and George Pérez, but it also had a fairly high price at $5.95 each.

Mike: I looked at the first few pages and said, "Wow!" Even though I'm not really a fan of the Hulk—I don't particularly like the regular series—this particular story just looked like it was going to be good. It was like Neil Gaiman writing the Hulk, without the people in black in the background.

...if a book continually doesn't interest me, then I start looking at the price and say, "This is not worth it anymore."

Wizard: What about hardcovers or graphic novels? Now that they are getting up to $24.95 and $29.95, which is a big chunk from a comic buyer's budget, how do you determine if it is worth the money?

Mike: It is creator-driven up to a point. For example, I really like *Sandman*. If it wasn't for the graphic novel, I would not have been able to afford to read the first four issues. I'm not going to collect the newer *Sandman* graphic novels just because they stuck a few of the new issues together and came out with a graphic novel. I'm not going to say I have to have it, because I've read the stories.

Bruce: I can't think of very many graphic novels from which I actually already had the story. I have occasionally [bought them] because frequently, they will put something into the hardcover that you cannot get otherwise. I did that with the *Enemy Ace: War Idyll* limited hardcover. It was so cool that it was worth $75 for me to buy that book. And that is an example of a book that I would kick myself in the pants for not having bought...I love that book. It occupies a revered place in my comic collection.

Wizard: How about back issue prices? How do you determine if a high back issue price is worth it?

Mike: I'm a collector. It hurts for a collector to have a hole in his collection, and it's like a physical pain. I would like to have back issues of early *Sandman*. I can't afford them, but there are other things that I like that I can afford. *Green Arrow* is relatively inexpensive. I can pick up one or two a month and not put a big dent in my budget. But even with something as recent as the *X-Men* series, the introduction of Omega Red in #3 and #4 are ballistically hot. I have to save up. I can get two *Green Arrow*s for one *X-Men*, and more of what I really like.

Wizard: As we've seen, publishers have a pretty tough time getting new products noticed in today's competitive marketplace. The vast amount of material available has made for some tough choices for collectors. The key to collecting is realizing that you don't have to spend more than you can afford to enjoy the hobby. The current comic market can be a no-lose situation for collectors. With a little planning, you'll end up with more of what you really like. ☆

Exploring with Lois & Clark

Judging what a TV series will be like simply by looking at the stage sets is an interesting experience...and one I've just had.

Although, as you read this editorial, Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman has been airing for a couple of months, the premiere is still a few days away as I write this. I've just gotten back from a DC Comics-sponsored press junket to Los Angeles, where I and a handful of other members of the comics press had the opportunity to walk through the standing sets for the series.

I liked what I saw. The attention to detail on the sets makes me believe that some of the same attention has been paid to the scripts, the special effects, and the casting. These are not sets left over from some movie or redressed from another TV show.

Clark Kent's small apartment seems to be decorated with bits and pieces from everywhere Superman has ever been in his career. There are oriental statues, bric-a-brac from Central America and Mesopotamia, and an overall color scheme reminiscent of the "Santa Fe" look from a few years back.

That color scheme carries over into Lex Luthor's study, surprisingly enough. But the decor there is, in the words of Neil Schumann, publicist for Lois & Clark, "Pharaonic." In addition to his gun rack, the study is decorated with gigantic Babylonian bas-relief sculptures and medieval tapestries. Luthor's terrace—which overlooks the rooftops of seemingly every other building in Metropolis—is marked by a pair of giant winged statues, which also appear in the Lexcorp logo.

Lois Lane's apartment is quite a bit bigger than Clark's. (Maybe she's independently wealthy?) It features an eat-in kitchen, a huge bedroom with a stereo TV, and exercise equipment. The woman apparently likes to stay in shape.

The Kent farmhouse is a nice mix of contemporary and turn-of-the-century decorating styles. There's a big refrigerator, but there's also a classic wooden icebox. This is a family that's proud of its past, since there are pictures of the Kents (including Clark) as youngsters, along with photographs of older people who might be ancestors.

Finally, there's the Daily Planet newsroom—again, a mix of the old and the new. The whole place is done in dark wood, even the desks. It looks like what you'd expect a newsroom from around 1949 to look like...except that every desk has a computer and a modern phone. Newspapers and photos on the walls represent the important people and events the Planet has covered over the years. Schumann says we can expect this set to get a lot of use.

If you haven't heard, the producers are putting a heavy emphasis on the private lives and newspaper careers of the titular characters this time around, saying that as much as 75 percent of every hour-long episode will involve Lois and Clark in their civvies. Superman will generally appear for only about a quarter of each story.

Actually, that's not all that unusual. Think back to the original George Reeves Superman series. Often, until the last ten minutes, the show seemed more like Clark Kent, Reporter than the adventures of the Man of Steel. Take a look at The Flash from a few seasons back: that red-and-gold suit was held in reserve for the big finish.

The success of Lois & Clark will depend largely on how well the writers and actors manage to characterize Ms. Lane and Mr. Kent and the people who surround them, including Luthor, Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, and Cat Grant. By now, you have a better idea how it's worked out than I do.

I'm rooting for the new TV version of Big Blue to be a hit.

Pat O'Neill

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

P.S.: Special thanks to DC Comics and Patty Jeres and Bob Wayne for their hospitality in Los Angeles.

THE ED.

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AYE CARUMBA!

Matt Groening and the Bongo Comics crew launch Springfield's most famous residents into a new line of Simpsons comics.

By Michael Berry

There's little doubt who rules Twentieth Century Fox these days.

As soon as you turn into the lot from Century City's Pico Boulevard, the first thing that hits your eye is their billboard, positioned prominently to one side of the guard shack. There they are, in all their jaundiced glory: the cartoon residents of Springfield, U.S.A. Their bug-eyed, yellow-skinned, chinless greeting lets you know that you're about to enter the birthplace of America's favorite animated family, the Simpsons.

The drab exterior of the building that houses their creator's office, however, gives no indication that anything special happens within. It isn't until you reach Matt Groening's sanctum sanctorum that the full enormity of the Simpsons' assault on popular culture smacks you in the face. The office contains a prosaic desk, a drawing table, and a comfy couch, but most of the rest of its space is devoted to Simpsons paraphernalia, both licensed and bootlegged, both slickly manufactured and hopelessly amateurish.

There's a Simpsons pinball machine. A bottle of scary-looking pink Bart Simpson soda pop from Indonesia. A display of the new book, *Bart Simpson's Guide to Life*. Hideous, canary-yellow Homer and Bart plaster statues fresh from the streets of Tijuana. Near-lifesize, home-made felt hand puppets of Homer and Marge, guaranteed to send any two-year-old into paroxysms of fear.

Framed magazines featuring Springfield's first family on their covers hang on the walls. Sure, there are the expected issues of *Newsweek*, *Spy*, and *People*. But the really cool stuff comes from periodicals like the *National Employment Review* ("Is the Nuclear Industry 'Pulling a Homer?'"), *7 á Paris* ("Avez-Vous La Simpsonite?"), and Japan's *WowWow* (your guess is as good as mine).

In the midst of this monument to merchandising at its finest, it takes you a moment to realize that there's something missing. Something you'd think would be an obvious spinoff from one of the most popular animated television shows of all time.

Shouldn't there be a *Simpsons* comic book around here someplace?

Funny you should ask. By the time Thanksgiving rolls around, the newly-created Bongo Comics Group will have released its first titles. Not only are Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie finally getting an ongoing comic to call their own, but so are those fur-covered TV terrorists Itchy and Scratchy, as well as superheroes Bartman and Radioac-

Left to right: Homer Simpson, Father of the Year; Matt Groening with friend; the cover to *Bartman* #1.

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tive Man. During its first year, the fledgling company plans to publish a total of 18 issues of various titles.

Compared to the weekly output of industry giants like Marvel and DC, that may sound like extremely small pork chops. But when you consider that Bongo Comics is basically comprised of only four people, folks already busy handling other aspects of the growing Simpsons empire, its start-slow strategy becomes much more understandable.

The quartet of major Bongo players includes *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening, creative directors Steve and Cindy Vance, and art director Bill Morrison. The informal nature of their collaboration blurs the division of labor a bit, but a few generalizations can be made. From a small office in Santa Monica, once a recording studio for Bob Dylan, the Vances co-plot the stories, with Steve handling the layouts and Cindy later acting as colorist. Morrison usually provides the finished art, sometimes with assistance from other members of the *Simpsons* art stable. As publisher, Groening oversees it all, throwing in his own humorous ideas and making sure the finished product represents the same vision as the television series.

Groening and Steve Vance are comics fans from way back. Steve goes so far as to state, "Comic books really changed my life." (Cindy Vance somewhat sheepishly admits that comics never particularly interested her until fairly recently. It was Dave Sim's *Cerebus* that got her reading again.)

Steve Vance loved to draw as a kid, and read comics occasionally, but not fanatically. "But when I was about 12," he says, "somebody gave me a stack of Marvel comics, and suddenly my interest in drawing clicked into place. It was like, 'Oh, that's why I've been practicing since I could pick up a crayon.' I just immediately became a fanatical collector."

Groening's experience is somewhat similar. "I was as obsessed with comics as any other normal little suburban freak growing up in the '50s and early '60s," he says. "But I was lucky, because I had a very hip older brother who turned me on to the good stuff."

"I was as obsessed with comics as any other normal little suburban freak growing up in the '50s and early '60s."
—Groening on comics as a kid.

Mark Groening had a secret club that met in the loft of a garage. Too little to climb up the ladder and walk across a beam into the loft, young Matt had to wait until he was six or seven before he got the nerve to go up there himself.

"I found these incredible piles of great comics. The EC horror and science-fiction titles. *Mad, Uncle Scrooge, Little Lulu*. Looking back on it now, I see how these kids had incredible taste."

Groening and his friends eventually established their own clubhouse, which was located through a hole in the concrete foundation of a neighbor's house. Groening says, "We took all the comics out of the loft and moved them into this cave and read them with flashlights—until someone saw us going in and out of the hole in the wall and cemented it up. Our comics are entombed!" Groening laughs. "But I'm thinking I should go back with a jackhammer..."

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Some parents discourage their kids' obsession with drawing comics, but Groening's dad, a cartoonist who did single-panel gags, understood his son's compulsion. "I grew up surrounded by comic books and cartoon anthologies," Groening says. "We received every general-interest magazine in the country, because my father also did advertising. So I grew up reading *Punch*, the *New Yorker*, and *Esquire*, and I was really taken by such cartoonists as Ronald Searle, Rowland Emmett, and a bunch of others. My father gave me drawing supplies, showed me a few tricks, and I've been drawing ever since."

During those early days, Groening concentrated mainly on rendering monsters, war scenes, and endless variations of Batman, but he also experimented with

Steve and Cindy Vance.

some original characters. He says, "I created a character named Melvin, who was the precursor of Bart. And yes, Melvin was also secretly SuperMelvin, who was basically the same character with a cape." Years later, in Hollywood, Groening tried to do a Saturday morning TV show called *Melvin's Inferno*. Unlike SuperMelvin, it didn't fly.

After a while, the adolescent Groening found his attention captured by other pursuits. "As I grew older and discovered rock 'n' roll and girls, comics didn't seem quite so enticing anymore. Besides, girls really weren't impressed by comic books, nor were they impressed by me drawing comic books. They were something some girls would tolerate, but they weren't a good way to get a date. In fact, I think that's part of why cartoonists draw, because they couldn't get dates in high school."

Groening never completely put the drawing pen away. In 1977, he created *Life in Hell*, the weekly strip that skewers modern culture and introduced its irascible rabbits—Binky, Sheba, and, of course, one-eared Bongo—to a mildly bewildered reading public. Such compilations as *Love is Hell*, *Work is Hell*, and *Akbar & Jeff's Guide to Life* injected a welcome dose of skepticism in the Reagan '80s, and found a wide, appreciative audience.

It was while working as an editor for the *L.A. Reader*, an alternative newspaper, that Groening met graphic artist Steve Vance, freshly arrived in town in 1980. After looking at Vance's portfolio and seeing how comics art had influenced his commercial illustration, Groening and Vance struck up a friendship.

In 1987, Groening produced his first 30-second Simpsons spot for Fox Broadcasting's *The Tracey Ullman Show*. Those early bits were pretty rough around the edges, but Groening says he was always confident that his characters had the potential to carry their own prime-time, half-hour show.

"I knew that if we could get our vision on the air, it would be a huge success. I was afraid only of two things. First, that it would be watered down before it got on the air. Second, that adults wouldn't give it a chance. I knew kids would tune in, because they are desperate for good cartoons on TV."

Groening's fears proved to be unfounded. When *The Simpsons* premiered as a series on January 14, 1990, it immediately became a national phenomenon, attracting viewers from a phenomenally wide range of ages and professions. Within weeks, it seemed like you couldn't walk out of the house without seeing someone in a Bart Simpson "Underachiever and Proud of It" T-shirt.

Amid the deluge of Simpsons merchandising came a quarterly magazine, *Simpsons Illustrated*, largely produced by Bill Morrison and the Vances. It was here that the idea of doing a full-line of comic books first sprouted. The magazine occasionally ran comic stories, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

"We found that readers just loved the comics we put in it," Groening says. "So we tried an experiment. We did *Simpsons Comics and Stories* #1, and just put it out there to see what the reaction would be. People liked it so much that we realized that we had lots we could say with comics."

"I think that our approach will be similar to that of the show in that not everybody is going to get every joke."
—Steve Vance discusses the new books.

Wouldn't it have been easier simply to license the characters to another comics company?

Groening answers, "We were pursued by every major company, [all of them asking us] to allow them to do their version of a Simpsons comic. I just didn't want to. The point is to have fun and do really good stuff. We could have sold out for the quick buck, but we decided to do it ourselves. It's a lot harder, but we have more control. And in the long run, it's really going to be a fun ride for us as creators and for dedicated readers.

"Starting a brand-new comic book company is hard to pull off, but we have these characters that people really love, and we can say new things about them by utilizing the medium of comics. We're not coming in, taking a licensed property, and just exploiting it."

Groening says that he sees *The Simpsons* as alternative television, and that he'd like to think that the wares of the Bongo Comics Group will also be an alternative, to standard comics fare. "We're trying to carve out a niche in the market with basically humorous material. There's so much 'grim superhero' stuff out there."

Weekly television and comics, however, are two very different media, and their rules and expectations are sometimes incompatible. Will the new comics differ significantly from the show?

Steve Vance says, "Only in that we know we will have an audience more knowledgeable about comics than the audience of the TV show. I think that our approach will be similar to that of the show in that not everybody is going to get every joke. I mean, Matt has admitted that the writers and animators stick in jokes that even he doesn't get."

Groening agrees. "What we try to do on the TV show is reward people for paying attention. Most television is pretty thin gruel. If you pay attention, you get annoyed, because there's nothing much going on. With *The Simpsons*, though, if you pay attention, there are extra jokes in there. Subtle jokes that you may not get unless you've read a lot of books or have a wide range of cultural references.

"I like to think of the show as a kind of delayed-reaction time-bomb, so that years from now, when kids watch it in reruns as adults, they'll go, 'Oh my God! There's a whole other level of jokes I didn't get back in the old days.' We're going to try to do an equivalent amount of detail and subtlety in the comic book."

The Bongo team will also strive for a similar subtlety in the characterizations. In Steve Vance's opinion, the main reason the television series works is that, despite the slapstick, satire, and bright primary colors, there's a strong sense of reality at work.

"I feel like there's a spirit to the show that people can really relate to in their everyday lives. There are absurd things happening on the show that have never happened to a human being, but on a smaller level, the level of interpersonal relationships, I think it's really realistic.

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I think people appreciate that."

The Vances are confident they can translate that same sensibility to the comic. "We've worked with Matt for quite a long time," says Cindy. "After you've worked for him for many years, you get better at guessing which way he would go with something. Generally, we're right."

Steve says, "Matt has the advantage of knowing the characters from the inside out. They're his characters, and if anybody knows how to be true to them, he's the one. Obviously, that's an incredible advantage we have over any situation where the characters are licensed to some other company, which just starts cranking them out."

Groening says he sees himself as "the tinkerer." He says that "people come up with great artwork and I say, 'Can we try this?' If a story is really well fleshed-out, I'll go in and add those little details that aren't part of the story: funny store names, secondary characters, stuff like that."

Groening says that, above all, his objective is to maintain good storytelling. "That's what I see as most neglected in comic books. There's some fantastic artwork out there, but a lot of the stories are

pretty flat. I don't think we're going to get that kind of devotion to the comic based on the art, although we're going to try some interesting things with it. But it's still going to be people with big eyeballs and tragic overbites."

Those "interesting things" Groening is planning for the artwork will include tributes to the comics of yesteryear. Steve Vance says, "When we were just beginning to organize the company, talking about what we were going to do, Bill Morrison did some sketches spoofing great moments in comic book history. One of the things he did was a parody of the cover of *Fantastic Four* #1, with Homer as the giant creature coming up from under the street. We got a big laugh out of that. Cindy and I looked at each other and said, 'There's a story here!' So we sat down and plotted 'The Amazing Colossal Homer.'

"We figure that there's going to be something in the comic for everyone," says Vance. "If you like the show, you'll enjoy the comics. If you like the show and are a comics fan, you'll get even more from them."

On the television series, little effort is made to maintain an internally consistent chronology. When Bart slips Homer an exploding beer can as an April Fool's Day prank in one episode and subsequently destroys the house, you can bet everything will be back to normal the following week, with no further mention of the incident. As any continuity-obsessed fanboy will tell you at length, however, comics lend themselves to complex serial storytelling.

"The nature of network television is that people have to end up where they were at the beginning of the show," Groening says. "In the comics, we're going to have consistent continuity. Again, because people are reading it month after month, we're going to reward them for paying attention and have an overall story."

Just don't expect any monumental cliffhangers. Vance explains, "At the moment, our most frequent publication is bimonthly. And I really hate the idea of making people wait 60 days to catch up with the story. But we are going to have plot threads that run from issue to issue."

The creators are laying the groundwork for two or three large stories planned for later next year. Vance refuses to give away any details, but hints, "One thing that attracted me to Marvel's books was that soap opera aspect to them."

Groening also seems to enjoy comic book melodrama. "Is Aunt May still alive?" he asks. "She was hanging on by a thread when I stopped reading."

Just as some comic readers have a certain fondness for Peter Parker's aged relative, there are those *Simpsons* viewers who want to know a little bit more about the personal lives of Principal Skinner, Krusty the Clown, Ned Flanders, or Moe the bartender. On TV, and in comics, a one-shot appearance can sometimes lead to greater things for a minor character.

Groening says, "There are secondary characters I didn't particularly care for who I now feel are alive and whom I want to take care of. When bad things happen to them, I feel horrible, even though part of the fun is causing them great pain and humiliation.

"I'm very attached to the Simpson family and everybody in it, but I'm also concerned about characters like Otto the bus driver and Barney the barfly. With Barney, I wanted to take the sitcom hero's sidekick, who is generally the lovable fool—Barney Rubble, Ed Norton—and make him really pathetic and disgusting. But even Barney's lovable."

Groening also confesses to a real fondness for Hindu retail clerk Apu. "In every episode, you get more of a clue of what he's really like. We have a show coming up next season in which Homer and Apu make a journey back to India to the Kwik E Mart home office. It's a very funny episode."

Simpsons Comics will very definitely explore the lives of these and other secondary characters. Each issue contains a 22-page main story that focuses on the Simpson clan, while six-page back-up features give the creators room to write about cast members who couldn't necessarily carry their own book.

Fully illustrated back covers will give readers an idea of what those never-to-be-published spinoff titles might have been. One such title will be *Patty and Selma's Ill-Fated Romance Comics,* featuring Marge's lovely sisters.

Groening says, somewhat proudly, that he thought of a new comic title on the way to the interview: "*Otto the Bus Driver's Crashpad Comics*. What that will be, I don't know."

Part of the fun of watching *The Simpsons* is keeping an ear tuned for celebrity guest voices. Everyone from Sting to Liz

Taylor to Aerosmith to Tom Jones has taken a turn at the mike. The list of guests for the upcoming television season includes Michelle Pfeiffer, Ernest Borgnine, George Harrison, and James Taylor. The Ramones, of punk rock fame, will provide entertainment at Mr. Burns' birthday party. ("Ah! These minstrels will soothe my jangled nerves.")

Will caricatures of famous faces be making their way into the comics? Groening shrugs and says, "It's possible, but we don't have any plans for it. It's fun for celebrities to do *The Simpsons*. It's one day's work. They don't have to memorize any lines, don't have to dress up. They have a real good time. I don't know if there's that same kind of thrill when you're depicted in a comic book."

Traditionally, comics haven't done an exemplary job of depicting female characters or appealing to female readers. The folks at Bongo Comics Group therefore want to make sure that the male denizens of Springfield don't hog the spotlight. Marge, Lisa, and Maggie will continue to be prominent members of the cast.

Groening says, "We know viewers love Lisa Simpson, so we're going to try to explore her character in the comic. She's someone a lot of women feel passionately about. I've had people tell me that some of the shows about her brought tears to their eyes. Although we're not out to make people weep in the comic book, we're going to try to show real emotions. We'll keep the women characters alive."

The challenge is not to allow Bart's popularity to overwhelm the books. Cindy Vance says, "Undoubtedly, Bart will get a lot of attention. But that's one of the reasons why we're doing *Bartman*, so the Simpsons comic can highlight other characters in the main storyline."

Groening says that the semi-bimonthly *Bartman*, which debuts in December, will be about Bart's fantasy life and is "much wilder" than *Simpsons Comics*.

Steve Vance doesn't want to give away any surprises about the plot of the book, saying only that "the first issue deals with the world of comic book collecting, and the kind of speculative frenzy that we're seeing a lot of now." From his secret lair within a hollow tree, assisted by his faithful sidekick Houseboy (a.k.a. Milhouse), Bartman, the Avenger of Evil, finds himself up to the top of his nine-pointed head in criminal intrigue.

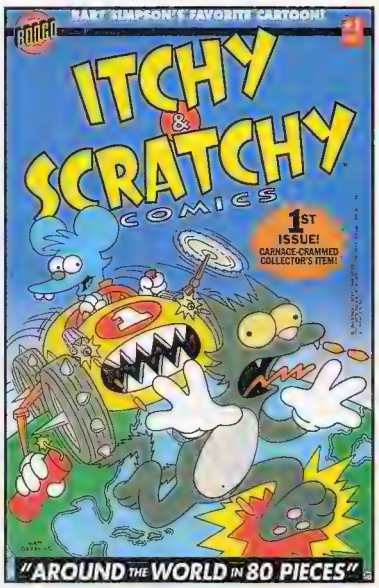
"I think you'll be surprised by what we can do with Itchy and Scratchy in the comic. There's going to be enough mindless violence to satisfy the die-hard fans, but there will be a little story there, too."
—Steve Vance

Groening says that one of the projects he's most excited about is the semi-bimonthly six-issue *Radioactive Man* mini-series, based on the comic book Bart reads on *The Simpsons*. (Groening chuckles and says, "Of course, the real 'radioactive man' is Homer.")

As the promotional literature promises, *Radioactive Man* "spans the Irradiated Crusader's entire career, from his plutonium-powered origin to his latest battle with Dr. Crab."

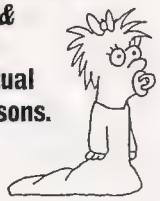
"We thought it would be fun to explore what that comic would really be like. Issue #1 is going to be from 1952. Each step of the way, we're going to feature artwork and story styles of a classic comic era: Golden Age, Silver Age, all the way up to the present."

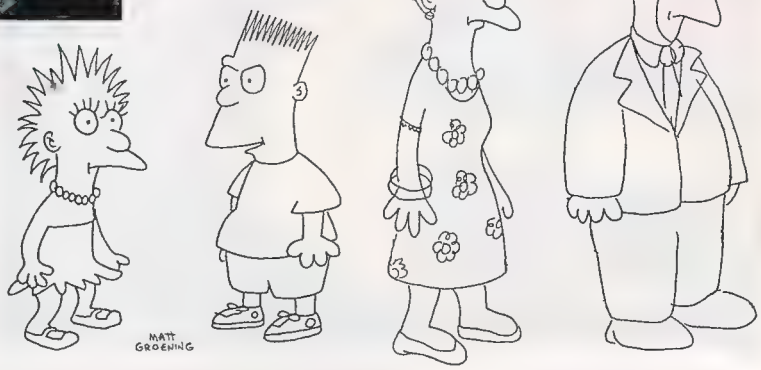
The Radioactive Man universe is still under construction, but Groening says, "It is so much fun to take our favorite elements out of the comics we grew up with, and pay homage to, or parody, them. Anybody who knows the history of comics is going to be able to appreciate this stuff, but if you don't get the inside references, then it's still going to be a great comic."



You can't very well launch a new line of comics without a few marketing gimmicks, and while Bongo Comics isn't going the polybags-and-holocovers route, the first batch of books do contain some extra goodies. Each #1 issue has a jumbo pull-out poster, and the four pieces can be assembled to form your own "ultra-jumbo Bongo Universe mural."

Radioactive Man will get off to an extra-bright start. Steve Vance says, "We've





left to right: *Radioactive Man* #1; Homer, Matt, and Marge. Above, left: Matt sketches out a Bart; above, right: *Itchy & Scratchy* #1; right: an original conceptual sketch of the Simpsons.

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got a glow-in-the-dark cover for the first issue, because there's a joke in there, not just a marketing ploy. We're trying to price these books as low as we can to cover the cost of doing them. We're not raking in a lot of extra dough by doing special covers. The gimmicks are just something to add an extra level of humor."

It's easy to see the possibilities inherent in a superhero like *Radioactive Man*, but what can you do with a cartoon cat and mouse whose sole purpose in life seems to be inflicting horrendous bodily torture upon one another? Where's the room for insightful characterization and deep social commentary?

Groening acknowledges the challenge. "Everybody says they want more Itchy and Scratchy on the show, and they want them to have their own series. But I really think you do get your money's worth with ten to twenty seconds of *The Itchy and Scratchy Show*."

Nevertheless, Bongo Comics is forging ahead with a semi-bimonthly *Itchy and Scratchy Comics*. Says Groening, "In the same way that the animated version is an extreme send-up of cat and mouse cartoons, the book will explore that end of over-the-top violent humor, along with parodies of 'funny animal' comics."

Steve Vance says, "I think you'll be surprised by what we can do with Itchy and Scratchy in the comic. There's going to be enough mindless violence to satisfy the die-hard fans, but there will be a little story there, too. We're going to go into the world of Itchy and Scratchy beyond what you see on the TV show. In their universe, they're actors, and we'll see them on and off the job."

Groening and the Vances all see these initial offerings from Bongo Comics as only the beginning of a much larger enterprise. "These are only the most obvious things that we're doing," Groening says. "As we go along, if these titles work, we're going to branch out and try new things, new characters."

And Bongo Comics is by no means a closed shop. "We're open to submissions and outside involvement," says Groening. "Just don't call me at home."

And don't assume that, just because you can recite the dialogue from every episode, you necessarily have what it takes to put words in the Simpsons' mouths. Explains Cindy Vance, "We found with the magazine that it's a lot harder than people realize to write for *The Simpsons*. People think they can just write humor for any sort of sitcom. It doesn't work. There's a certain tone that people find hard to capture."

If all goes according to plan, Bongo Comics will eventually publish titles that have absolutely no connection to the Simpsons. "I personally can't imagine doing anything that doesn't have an element of humor in it," says Groening, "but I do have some science fiction projects, and a monster project. I also plan to expand the *Life in Hell* universe from its weekly strip into something more ambitious."

Speaking of *Life in Hell*, which gave Groening his start in the business, it has been forced to take a backseat to other, more pressing projects.

"The show and the comic book company take precedence over my own work," Groening says. "With that stuff, there's a group of people awaiting my input. The comic strip is just me, and I can always make a deal with my brain: 'Oh, I'll do this at midnight.' I have been doing *Life in Hell* at the last possible moment for about twelve and a half years out of the last 13 years. It definitely concentrates the pain into a short amount of time. If I do them ahead of time, I often go, 'Oh, I could do it better,' and I start it over again."

The focus of the strip has mutated over the years. Groening says, "I used to explore a lot of the dark side of childhood in *Life in Hell*, but I feel that material is well-covered in *The Simpsons*. So these days, I'm more interested in the traumas of adult relationships.

"*The Simpsons* is a very smart show about stupid people. *Life in Hell* is more about people who are too smart for their own good. I would love to animate *Life in Hell* and explore that further. *The Simpsons* may be a fluke. They may never let me go wild again, but if I can, the next thing will be wilder than *The Simpsons*."

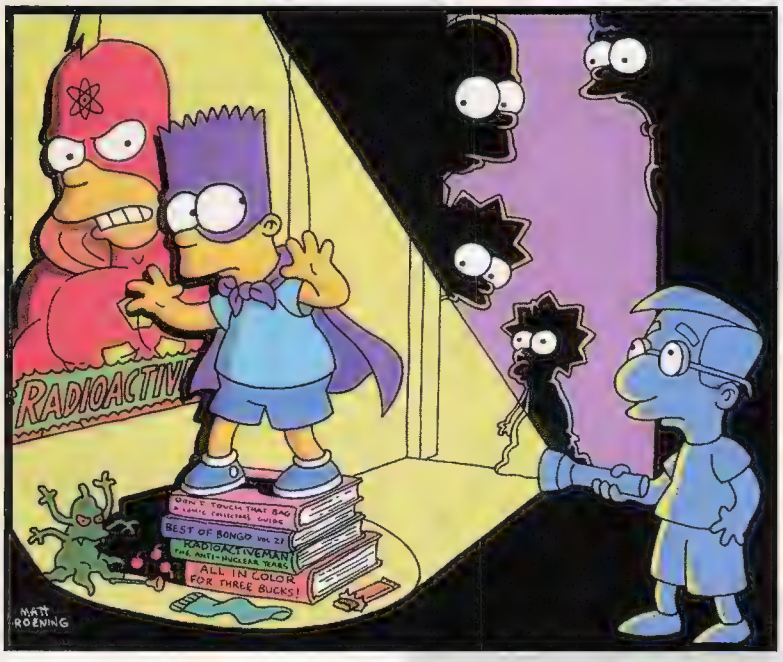
Wherever Groening goes from here, it's clear that he has already more than exceeded his expectations for his own cartooning talent. In the publisher's note in the first issue of *Simpsons Comics and Stories*, he writes, "Cartoonist? I figured I'd grow up to be a miserable grump pulling a cart in a tire warehouse, making insulting caricatures on the walls of the loading dock when the supervisor wasn't looking."

Now, the driving force behind one of the most popular animated series of all time, he says, "Years ago, when I was more of a struggling cartoonist, I used to sit at Astro Burger, which was this lousy local joint on Melrose, with Gary Panter and other young artists. We would scheme about trying to invade the mainstream, see how far we could get with our weird ideas. Gary went on to design *Pee-wee's Playhouse* and develop a fine arts career. I lucked out with *The Simpsons*."

Groening laughs. "It seemed to be more fun to bug a whole bunch of people instead of just your friends." ☆

Michael Berry is a freelance writer based in Northern California.

Milhouse puts Bartman in the spotlight.



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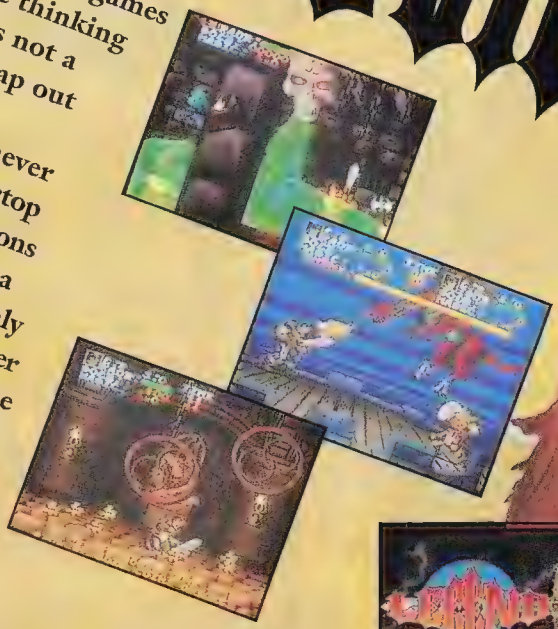

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NEXT!

John Byrne speaks about his past works, the future of the Next Men, and his role in the formation of the Legend imprint.

By Brian Cunningham

John Byrne has had an impact on the industry ever since he entered it in the mid-1970s. He helped restore *Uncanny X-Men*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Superman*, among other titles, to their former glory, acquiring a reputation for reliable, solid storytelling and earning a special place in fans' hearts in the process. Currently, Byrne is working on a host of creator-owned projects, including the acclaimed *John Byrne's Next Men* and the upcoming *Danger Unlimited* series, both published by Dark Horse. Recently, he and Frank Miller, along with Mike Mignola, Art Adams, Dave Gibbons, Geof Darrow, and Paul Chadwick, have formed Legend, a "floating" imprint used when the seven produce creator-owned projects. Recently, *Wizard* had a chance to talk with John about Legend, his past and upcoming projects, and the industry in general.

Wizard: What led to the formation of Legend?

John Byrne: Well, I guess the idea had been percolating in the minds of several of us for quite some time, and we had been looking at other people making their various attempts to create an icon or imprint. Basically, we looked at what others had done and decided we could figure out what would really suit our particular temperaments, egos, and needs to the best advantage. And so we assembled the concept of Legend. With the seven, we have put together a club of artists who like to do "good stuff."

Can any other creators join the imprint?

At this point, the door is closed. I would say it's highly unlikely that anyone will be brought in at this point.

Is Legend what led you to drop all your projects for other publishers?

Basically. It's one of those situations where, once one has put a toe into the self-publishing and creator-owned marketplace...one realizes just how much one has been missing, not only in economic returns, but just the sheer...power! "Hey, I get to do whatever I want to do! Nyaah!" Legend was a natural outgrowth for each of us of that, us finally saying, "Okay, it doesn't seem to work in the current marketplace if you're doing it all on your own. What if the bunch of us sort of hang together?"

Are you going to be exclusive to Legend?

"I am Legend and Legend is me." In that context, yes. We are thinking of Legend, as Frank Miller coined it, as a floating icon, which means that, within some very loosely defined boundaries, any time anyone does a creator-owned project, whatever company we do it for, we will put the Legend imprint on it. It will go wherever we go, except that Frank and I have, as dictators, the ability to say, "No, you can't use the Legend icon if you're doing a project for 'Company A' or 'Company B.'"

Are "A" or "B" specific companies?

No, Frank and I will make a decision on a company-by-company basis.

Aside from you and Frank Miller, how were the other five drawn into Legend?

Well, most of them were vaguely connected to us in various other ways. Two of the others, Geof Darrow and Dave Gibbons, were already working with Frank. Mike Mignola invited me to serve as a scripter on a book he was planning on doing. So we sort of came together more or less because of the fact that we were already touching each other. Then once the base group—which ultimately included Art Adams, who's a good buddy of Mike's and a talent to be reckoned with—had formed, we set about trying to seduce Paul Chadwick into joining us. I always said that I wanted Paul with us, because he gave us credibility, since he had been fighting "the good fight" longer than any of us.

Considering the people you already had, asserting that Chadwick lends credibility really says a lot!

He gives us credibility in the creator-owned marketplace. Frank had been out there with guns blazing and I had taken a few tentative steps, but Paul had basically never done anything else. He was out there fighting "the good fight" all on his own, being largely ignored, winning prizes yet making no money, and we thought that having somebody like him in the group would be good for us and, hopefully, good for him.

Why is Dark Horse the current home of Legend?

Mostly because that's where the projects we are already doing are. *Next Men* is going to be the first book to appear under the Legend icon. And inasmuch as we all sort of found ourselves at Dark Horse, it didn't seem there was any necessity to take it anywhere else. We will probably take other projects elsewhere at different times, depending upon market variations, politics, and egos, but since most of us are quite comfortable at Dark Horse right now, that seems to be a good place to start.

Legend has been loosely compared to Image Comics, and you've said that that isn't so. Why?

Primarily because we are not setting out to be a comic book company. We have no interest, for example, in setting up studios or having people doing work for hire, farming out the projects that we initiate. In all cases, when ... our interest ends, the project ends. Frank's not going to hire someone else to continue *Sin City* once he's finished with it. I'm not going to hire someone else to continue *Danger Unlimited* or *Next Men* once I'm finished with them. They are our little toys and we are the only ones who [can] play with them. Basically, the main difference is that Image has clearly set out to become Marvel Comics, and we don't want to be Marvel. We want to be what Image had originally announced themselves to be—a bunch of happy-go-lucky freelancers who are just sort of hanging out together.

Your animosity towards Image and its founding creators is well-known. What's behind your feelings towards them?

My animosity is not towards the creators, it is towards the concept as executed. For what seems like ten years now, I've been ragging on Marvel for turning away from what I think the point of comics is, becoming increasingly "event"-oriented, gimmick-oriented, superstar-oriented...[instead of] telling good, solid comic book stories. Along came Image, which seemed to be based entirely upon events, gimmicks, and superstars, and not telling stories. I was surprised that anybody else was surprised that I would then proceed to dump on them, because I had already been dumping on Marvel for the same thing. As far as I'm concerned, Image wanted to be Marvel in the worst way...and they are.

What is it like to work with the other six creators of Legend?

So far, it's great. I mean, it's kind of a strange conglomeration. Mike, Art, and I are in the process of building a kind of a shared universe with three of our titles. But at the same time, my *Next Men* is not connected with it, so I have a non-shared and a shared universe. There are other non-shared universes: *Next Men*

Major changes are in store for Next Men

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"I've been ragging on Marvel for turning away from what I think the point of comics is, becoming increasingly 'event'-oriented, gimmick-oriented, superstar-oriented, instead of telling good, solid comic book stories."

has nothing to do with *Sin City* and *Martha Washington Goes To War*. When I first started telling Frank about *Danger Unlimited*, he suggested that we might do a crossover with his new book that he and Geof are doing, *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*. I was quite stunned to hear Frank use what we refer to as the "C-word"—the crossover—so it's really a kind of a fun, loose, rag-tag accumulation that, in many respects, has a feeling a lot like the early days of Marvel, the days when I was a little fan reading these great books as they were coming out. Here was the Fantastic Four, the Hulk, and Spider-Man, and they were sort of in the same universe, but they didn't fall all over themselves to emphasize that they were in the same universe. That, to me, was really neat.

Tell us about your new *Danger Unlimited* series.

Danger Unlimited is going to be everything *Next Men* isn't. I've been having a lot of fun with *Next Men* doing this sort of novelistic approach and keeping it very realistic, trying to keep the stories very low-key. But I had discovered that after almost two years of doing just *Next Men*, I'm really missing the old cosmic "hoo-hah" stuff. So what I've done is I've cobbled together a book in which I could do the big, cosmic, supervillains-everywhere stories with golden age and silver age characters. As [an] example, whereas the Next Men were the first superheroes to appear in their universe, *Danger Unlimited* will present a universe that already has a long history. The process of *Next Men* is to see how they would affect the world; the process of *Danger Unlimited* will be learning what's been going on in that world while we weren't looking.

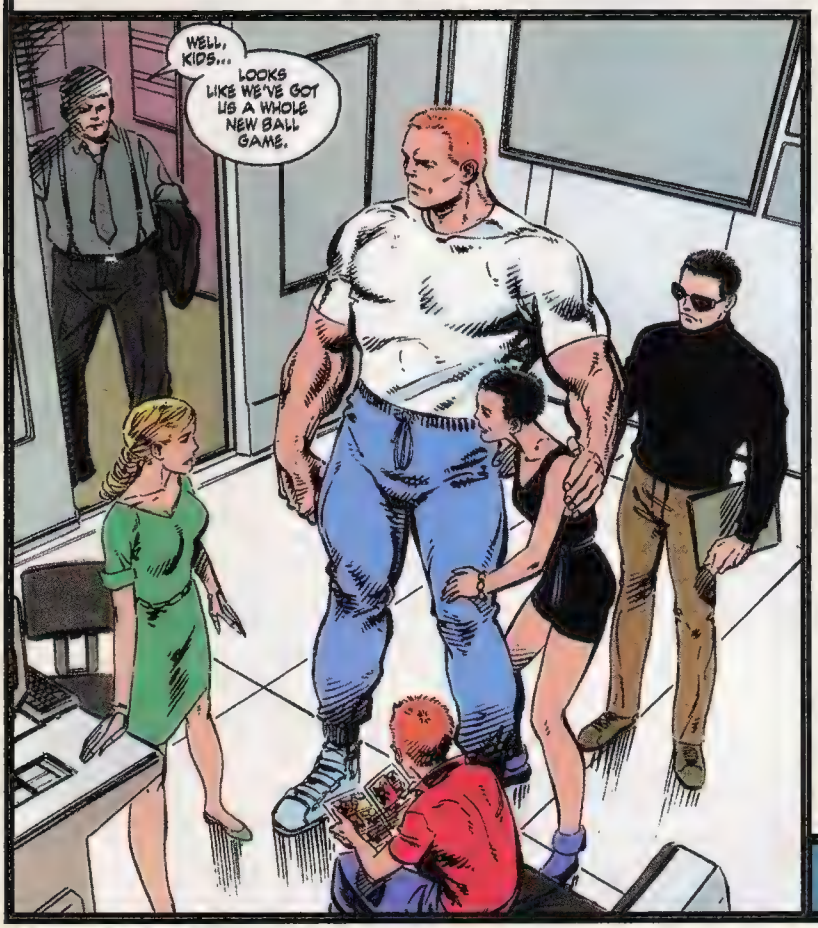
It's old-fashioned superheroes. It's essentially two teams, because it takes place in two time frames. One time frame roughly takes place between 1959 and 1985, and the other takes place from 2059 and forward. So I will have essentially two timelines running simultaneously. In one timeline you will see the characters age, develop, and change—which the FF (Fantastic Four), X-Men, and Challengers of the Unknown do not do because they are locked into comic book time—whereas in the future timeline, you will see characters that *are* locked into comic book time. Sixteen issues may represent two days. We will actually be able to have both things happening at once, and because the future will be grim and gritty, I will be able to give a fairly "real-world" take on the past and a post-apocalyptic take on the future.

How does *Danger Unlimited* link with Mignola's *Hellboy* and Adams' *Monkeyman and O'Brien*, given that they share the same universe?

I essentially bracket *Hellboy* and *Monkeyman and O'Brien* so that my first team disappears in 1985, which is before most of the *Hellboy* and *Monkeyman* stories take place. My second team returns in 2059, which is after the *Hellboy* and *Monkeyman* stories. But there's a character who is in the *Danger Unlimited* chronology, who is, for lack of a better term, *my* Captain America, who is a World War II character called The Torch of Liberty. He is closely involved in the origin of Hellboy and he is later involved in the some of the origin of the Danger Unlimited team. One of the Danger Unlimited guys is vaguely associated with a back story from *Monkeyman*.

How did you get involved with *Hellboy*?

Hellboy happened simply because Mike called me up and asked me if I'd like to script it. He and I have worked together before on *The World of Krypton* and *Superman*, and he'd enjoyed working with me. He likes the basic mechanics of the way I write and he likes my use of language and whatnot. He thought that that was the sound he wanted for *Hellboy*, and since he had these wild and crazy ideas that he wanted to string together and let blossom—*Hellboy* being all the things Mike has fun drawing without worrying too much whether they go together to make logical stories—he thought it might be fun



JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN™ & © JOHN BYRNE.

John Byrne's Next Men

to have somebody other than himself coming up with the elements that make logical stories out of it. So he just gets to make pictures and I get to write words.

Can we expect to see Legend cards or cards of your own sometime in the future?

I'm not a big fan of stuff like that. I won't say definitely not, but I have no particular plans. Mostly, I just want to do real old-fashioned comic books, and [I] hope people will buy them and not some associated gimmick.

You've said in the letters page of *John Byrne's Next Men* (*JBNM*, for short) that you're not interested in a *Next Men* crossover with any other team or publisher. What about *Danger Unlimited*?

There's a terribly anally retentive fanboy in me who has a lot of trouble with company crossovers. I thought the first Superman/Spider-Man thing was real neat as an *entity unto itself*. But once it turns into a regular thing that happens all the time, I can't get my brain to wrap around it. I keep running up against stuff like, "Okay, so if Superman and Spider-Man are in the same universe, then the first time Galactus appeared, why didn't Superman go after him?"

I'm trying to build more or less cohesive worlds of my own, and I don't want to pollute it with other universes.

What can we expect from *JBNM* in the next year or so?

Well, we are changing the publication format so that it will be a series of mini-series.

Whose decision was that?

That was mine. Dark Horse has a little bit of a problem getting stuff out on time, and I thought if we changed it so that it was "chunks o' books" instead of a monthly then we would diminish the likelihood of missed shipping and missed schedules. The numbering will continue—I know this is important to a lot of people—so for the first issue of the mini-series format, entitled "Faith," the cover will say "Faith—Part 1 of 4," but the inside will say "#19" because it is the nineteenth issue. So the numbers and the subplots will continue and everything else will stay exactly the same except that I will be limiting each story to a four-issue arc instead of just letting it run. I suspect that this will help eliminate the one—I won't say complaint—but the one little grumble that underlies most of the mail that I get on *JBNM*, which says, *"It's too damn slow!"* I say, "All right. Maybe it *is* too damn slow. Maybe it didn't need a six- or seven-issue origin sequence, and I could have done it in four."

So what can we expect plotwise from *JBNM* in the next year?

Currently, I'm halfway through the "Faith" cycle, which will be issues #19 through #22. The basic story is that the Next Men fall in with a group of homeless people living in the subways of New York. Most of the subways closed down for financial reasons in the future—bear in mind that *Next Men* takes place slightly in the future—and the Next Men fall in with this priest who introduces Jack to the concept of religion and to Jesus. Jack becomes a rather intense Catholic, and he starts repenting all the things he's done in the past, like…killing people! As a result of which Jack will be leaving the team at the end of that arc and going off on his own quest down in the subways to help these people survive. Meanwhile, the Next Men find that the Dollar Comic characters are starting to appear in the real world, and the Next Men find themselves battling *comic book characters*.

Starting with issue #23, we're going to have fully painted covers. A friend of mine from up in Canada is a painter and he and I have talked for a long time about doing this. He works in oils; he does photo-realistic paintings. He did a couple of pieces to show to Dark Horse and I was blown away and said, "How 'bout from now on, I'll do a drawing and you'll paint it?" The interesting thing is that we'll have Gary—his name is Gary Cody; I made him a character in *Alpha Flight*—painting the front cover and then my ink drawing will be on the back cover in black and white. So you'll be able to see what Gary was given to start with and I'll be able to see my stuff in black and white, which is the way I actually prefer it.

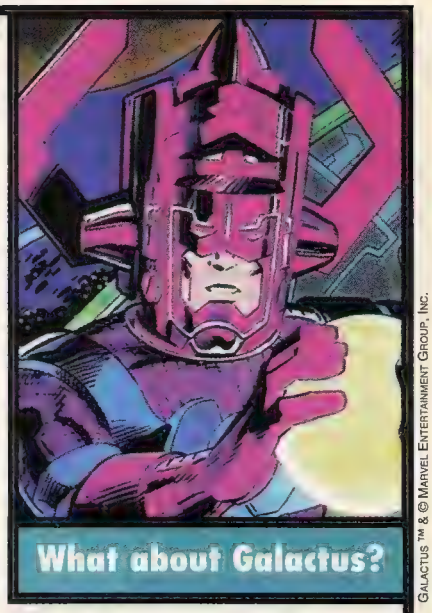
I've always preferred my work in black and white, but comic books are color. I guess maybe because I'm a little bit color-blind… I dunno, I guess I don't really think in color. I think the stuff looks stronger, even when you've got a really good colorist like Matt Webb, in black and white. But the medium, the marketplace, and the audience all seem to demand color.

So you've never actually considered getting into coloring?

No. Every once in a while I think about it but it's just one more job that I really don't need to do. As long as I have a colorist like Matt, then I'm happy.

How did you get Matt Webb onto *JBNM*?

Matt lives up near my friend, Roger Stern (the current writer of *Action Comics*) in upstate New York, and they are friends through a local comic book club. When I started up *JBNM*, I knew I wasn't going to be able to take (colorist) Glynis Oliver with me. Roger suggested that I send Xeroxes to Matt to "audition," and I liked what he did. And we've been working for—what?—20 issues now.



Galactus™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

The "X" in the early *JBNM* logo shone prominently. Did Marvel ever give you any problems with your logo?

No, I changed the logo because a number of people said it was hard to read. Marvel did send me a "cease and desist" letter because of the onomatopoeia—"Next Men" sounds like "X-Men." I sent them a letter back very politely saying the full title is *John Byrne's Next Men* and that doesn't sound like *Uncanny X-Men* or anything else. I haven't heard anything since and that's pretty much where it lies right now.

But I've received letters from fans saying they've gone into stores and asked for *Next Men* and been given *X-Men*, so I think Marvel doesn't have anything to worry about. If there's any confusion, it runs the other way. But I don't think there's any confusion now.

You worked hard to make Wolverine a good character. What are your feelings about the current status of the character?

I'm not really sure who the hell he is these days. There's so much stuff like the Weapon X story and subsequent things that put to lie the pieces of this, that, and the other thing.

The Wolverine that I was dealing with when I was doing the X-Men was a homicidal maniac, period. The reason he was in the X-Men was so that he could be controlled. I always thought that's all there really was to the character; that was what made him neat. He might be sitting there eating his Cheerios at breakfast and Kitty might come in and say, "Hi, Wolverine," in exactly the wrong

tone of voice and when Cyclops came in for breakfast, he'd find Kitty lying disemboweled on the floor with Wolverine still eating his Cheerios, totally oblivious to the fact that he'd just killed this girl... Nowadays, he has his berserker rages and he controls them and he does his samurai stuff...which, to me, has weakened the character considerably.

As with Wolverine, your take on Galactus remains among the most popular since Lee and Kirby chronicled the character. In 1984 you started a story in the now-defunct *Epic Illustrated* entitled "The Last Galactus Story," which was supposed to be a futuristic narrative climaxing with the death of Galactus. Since *Epic* came to an abrupt halt a few chapters into your story, it remains unfinished. Will the story's finale ever see print, and, if not, would you care to divulge its ending?

I've always said that I would only feel comfortable finishing the story if I was doing *Fantastic Four* because it's so much an integral part of the FF mythos. Now that I'm not directing the FF, I don't feel like Galactus is mine to mess with. To me, it would just feel kinda wrong.

To this day, people still come up to me at conventions asking me for the ending, and I tell 'em. I'm more than happy to tell people the ending.

If I remember correctly, it ended with ... a Watcher saying, "I'm the one behind all of this!" That Watcher would turn out to be the one who observed the creation of Galactus but had not done anything to prevent it. That Watcher has been driven insane and become a rogue because of that. He's trying to save any piece of the universe from the consuming drive of Galactus. He and Galactus end up getting into this big fight. Vast amounts of energy are consumed and the fight lasts for millions, perhaps billions, of years as the universe runs down. It's two infinitely powerful characters pitting their ultimate strength against each other.

Galactus realizes that the power of the Watcher is going to destroy the universe and that's not his job—Galactus knows that much. So Galactus sucks in all the power—he takes every last scrap of energy that's left in the universe—and he uses it to destroy the Watcher. Then there's all this energy that's boiling and bubbling inside Galactus, so what he does—his last act—he cracks the seals on his helmet. This releases all of the energy he has absorbed throughout his entire existence—which goes back to the beginning of our universe—and he explodes! And he is the "big bang" that begins the next universe.

You've said that, if asked, you would return to *Fantastic Four*. With your involvement in Legend, is this out of the realm of possibility?

Pretty much, at this point. But I have always said of all the books I had done at Marvel and DC, the *FF* was probably the one I would actually return to. Mostly because I was not comfortable with the way I left. I didn't leave *FF* because I was done with it, I left to save the editor the grief he was getting from above his station, because certain people were not happy with my work. So, I always said I sort of felt I betrayed my old friends, i.e., the characters, for leaving the way that I did.

"If there are people who are so dumb that they have to buy two copies just because there are two, then that's their problem."

JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN™ & © JOHN BYRNE.

Who was not happy with your work and why?

I'll just leave it as "certain people." I know why but it's not for publication.

What's your take on the current storyline going on in the Superman books?

I was talking to Mike Carlin recently and I said it's not what I would have done, but if I had done it, that's the way I would have done it. The whole idea of killing him and having other people come along and say they were Superman is something that never would've occurred to me. Taking that as a given—[the creators] are doing exactly what they should be.

In *JBNM* #1-6 there were certificates to mail in for trading cards. What are your feelings toward enhancements and premiums in comics?

I'm not a big fan of those. That was Dark Horse's idea and I let them do it solely because it did not affect the package, as far as I was concerned. You didn't have to send for the cards in order to understand the story; you didn't have to send for the cards at all. You could rip out the certificate and throw it away, if you wanted to. There was no extra charge for the certificate. It was just this extra thing that [you could get] if you wanted it.

At one point Dark Horse asked me if I could come up with some stuff to put on the backs of the cards that wouldn't be revealed anywhere else. And I never got back to them about it. I was never quite sure why I didn't, but I wonder now if there was some little thing in my brain that was saying, "If you do this, then in order to get the whole package, you would have to get the cards." I didn't want that to be the situation.

We had talked about putting out special foil-embossed, enhanced polybagged covers for the first issue of each of the mini-series that we Legend guys are going to be doing. I said, "That's okay, provided we put out a special *readers* edition that's a separate entity for fans who don't want to buy the special package."

Don't you think you might get criticized for creating two different versions, prompting people to have to buy two copies?

My philosophy about stuff like that is that if there are people who are so dumb that they have to buy two copies just because there are two, then that's their problem. I don't like the idea, but that's the way the marketplace is today. As long as I can continue to produce a package that I want to produce, which is a regular comic book for the readers to read, then I don't care what people do. There are people who *invent* different variations, and that's one slice of the speculator marketplace that I don't consider a legitimate part of fandom. As far as I'm concerned, the people I'm targeting my books for are those who want to buy a comic and *read* it. ☆

BLACK WATER CONCLUDES!

BREAKING FROM THE HERD

Non-conformist Joe Quesada speaks out on the comic book industry, his struggle to the top, and his newest project, *Ninjak*

by Rob Samsel

When most fans think of artist Joe Quesada, they usually think of one of the fastest rising stars in the comic book industry, someone who hit it big from the get-go. It wasn't like that at all for the New York City-born artist. In fact, his entrance into comics was pure luck, and his success is the result of hard work and dedication.

Quesada worked for years as a head salesman at an FAO Schwartz store, selling toys, until he started working as a "jack of all trades" at a lighting design store. It was while he was working here that his career took a fortuitous turn. Quesada relates, "While I was working in this store, this guy came in and said he wanted to buy some track lighting. So I'm helping him and he gives me his business card and tells me to give him a call when all the stuff is ready to be shipped. I look at the business card and it says he works for Valiant Comics. I didn't know what the hell Valiant Comics were. It turned out it was Art Nichols who gave me the business card. So we got to talking, and he told me to bring up my portfolio. I said I didn't have a penciling portfolio, because I've been a painter all my life. So he said bring up your painting samples. So I did, and they pretty much hired me on the spot. I started as a colorist there; the person who used to sit right across from me was John Cebollero, who I hated because he was so much better than me!"

He says that in Valiant's early days there was no "Knob Row," which is the nickname for the Valiant bullpen, where rookie artists, letterers, and colorists are "turned" into professionals. "[We] were all called peons. We didn't actually have names back then, that's how lowly we were. I jest, of course."

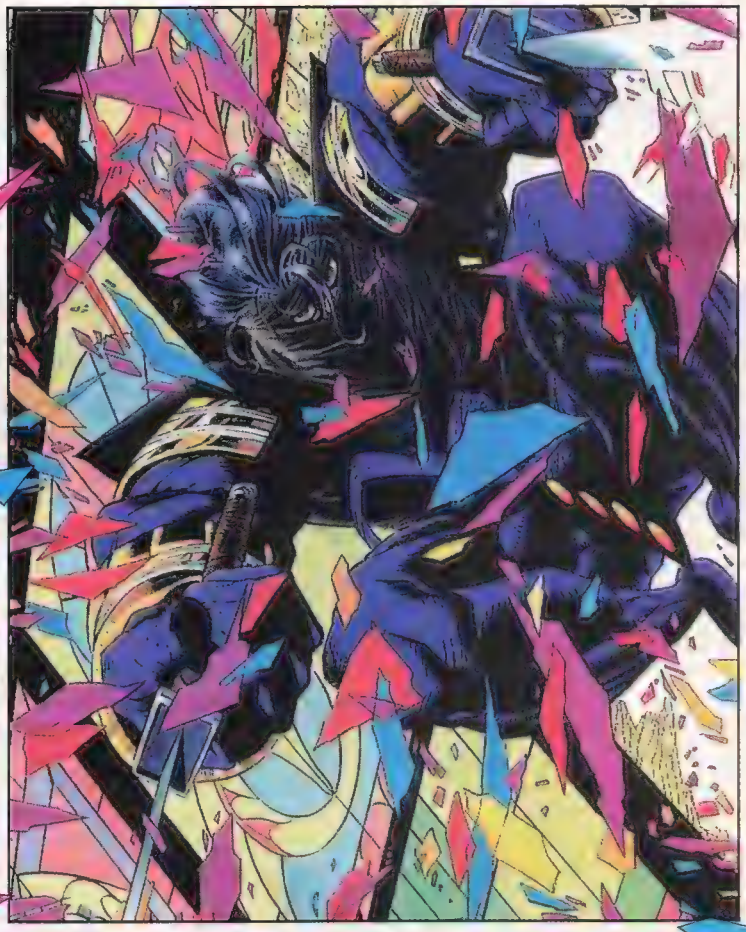
After getting laid off from Valiant, Joe went on to ply his talents at DC, penciling such books as *Spelljammer* and *Question Quarterly* before moving to his first regular stint on a book, *The Ray*. The Ray, who is a character Quesada co-designed with Jack C. Harris and Jim Owsley, is still close to his heart. "Someday, I would really love to do The Ray again. It was a character that was really near and dear

SOLAR, THE DESTROYER ™ & © WESTERN PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.

NINJAK AND ALL NINJAK SKETCHES AND ARTWORK ™ & © VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS.

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA.

Opposite, top: A Ninjak sketch peers from the background. Opposite, below: Solar, the Destroyer. At right: Ninjak busts onto the scene. Below: Joe at the "hot corner."



to me, but Lord knows if I'll ever get to it. I did get a call to do the cover to *The Ray* trade paperback, so I will be doing that, unless it's a painted cover, in which case I'll just be designing it."

While working on *The Ray* at DC, Joe laid the foundations for his eventual entrance into the world of one of comicdom's most famous and beloved characters, the Batman. Quesada gives us the lowdown: "While at DC, I was going around to Denny O'Neil's office, saying 'Mr. O'Neil, I'd gladly give my left one to draw Batman one day.' He kinda shook his head and said, 'No, get outta here, kid.'" O'Neil eventually relented, giving Quesada the assignment of penciling a nine-page story in the first *Legends of the Dark Knight* annual. "It was the first time I ever got to draw Batman, which was a high-pressure situation."

From there, O'Neil placed Quesada on another high-profile project, the *Batman: Sword of Azrael* mini-series. Quesada states, "After the *Dark Knight* annual, Denny came up to me and said, 'Look, we have this stunt in mind.' Now you have to remember, this was being planned before anyone knew about the death of Superman. The Batman guys were actually thinking about actually doing a number on Batman, but they had to change their plans because of Superman. So Denny said, 'We've got these plans for Batman; we're going to disable him, and we want to create a new character that's going to take over as the new Batman, and these are the plans we have.' So, we had several lunches and talked about it, and eventually came up with Azrael, and designed him." While Quesada states that he was pleased to be working on the assignment, there was one slight drawback. "Part of the deal to this mini-series was that I couldn't draw Batman that much in costume; he mostly appears as Bruce Wayne," he says. But his disappointment was quickly assuaged, as he relates. "Denny said that this will be a book that won't be noticed right away, but [which] eventually will be noticed. And he said [that I'd] also get the opportunity to design the new Batman. I said, 'Great, I'm sold, I'm there.' Luckily, we got Kevin Nowlan to ink it—somebody to make me look good. And the rest has been history."

From his stint on *Sword of Azrael*, Quesada moved into the Marvel House of Ideas, working on *X-Factor* for a six-issue run, but soon leaving the title "for a number of different reasons," he says. "It didn't have anything to do with the editors; I happen to like everyone I worked with up there. I just wasn't having as much fun with the book as I thought I would. That's the bottom line." After he left Marvel, there were rumors of Quesada joining several different publishers, and even a press release falsely stating that Quesada would soon be working with Image. Quesada says, "That was a total fallacy. The only work I've done for Image was a card in the Jim Lee WildC.A.T.s set [from Topps]. Aside from that, I had talked to Erik Larsen about someday doing a pin-up of Savage Dragon, because I happen to really dig that book. Outside of that, I've never talked to Image about any further projects. You get calls from people. Dark Horse offered me the *X* book to do on a monthly basis, but I turned it down. I'd rather take my own path, and I'm certainly not part of the 'follow the herd' mentality that's prevalent in this business. I've never believed in that."

"Layton mentioned that he was working on Valiant's version of Batman, and he thought it would be right up my alley."

Quesada's own path has taken him full circle, leading him back to the company that gave him his start in the business, Valiant, working on its newest title, one that he's particularly jazzed to be a part of: *Ninjak*. When asked about his agreement with Valiant, Quesada states that, as of press time, "There is no deal. We're negotiating the possibility of a continuity contract, meaning an undisclosed number of issues. You know, if you win the MVP after six issues, you get a bonus and the All-Star game and the whole thing. That's all we're discussing right now; nothing's been signed yet. I'm just working because it keeps me happy." When asked how he was drawn to the *Ninjak* assignment, Quesada relates, "Bob Layton and I had started talking about the *X-O Manowar* #0 book, and he mentioned that they were think-

ing about creating a character that was along the lines of the way I draw, which is a little darker, with strong storytelling. He [Layton] mentioned that he was working on Valiant's version of Batman, in a manner of speaking, a character who is in the shadows all the time, and he thought it would be right up my alley. So we talked about the character over several dinners, and we started developing Ninjak along with Jon Hartz. Kevin VanHook and Mark Moretti also had a hand in it. I did the visuals

on it. It's very difficult for me to delve too deeply into the character, because there's so much stuff that's going to be disclosed slowly but surely. His actual origin, his future, and the villain that comes into play in the *Ninjak* series are all going to drive Valiant fans nuts! Especially if you're an avid Valiant reader, you're just going to have to say, 'Oh my God! This is so cool!' Which is essentially what I said when Bob told me some of the premises."

Quesada was originally slated to do the initial *X-O Manowar* yearbook, a project he has every intention of completing. "The pages will dribble in when I can do them," he states. "We have the idea for what my yearbook is going to be. It was slated to be #1, but if they can get somebody who can put out a yearbook sooner than me, it might be #2. There's no rush. I don't want to hack something out, I want to do a great job on it. I know I knocked myself out on *X-O* #0; I worked on that day and night. It was rushed because I was running late on it, but I know I killed myself on it." Did he learn any lessons while working to keep *X-O* #0 as close to schedule as possible? "Absolutely, I'm learning the art of saying no. I've got a big sign over my drawing board, it just says 'NO!' I've pretty much said no to everything except for an occasional piece for the raggy fan magazine called *Wizard*. There's nothing else that's really pending. I'm learning I have a low threshold for boredom. Over at Valiant, we've plotted out a course of action on *Ninjak*. I think I'm going to be doing *Ninjak* for a while. I'm really going to focus on that, and keep myself out of doing covers and stuff like that. If I curtail my extracurricular activities, you'll see me on *Ninjak* for a while. That'll pretty much be home for now. I feel pretty confident about that. I couldn't be any happier. I've got the writer I wanted to work with [Mark Moretti], I've got my best friend inking it [Jimmy Palmiotti], and another friend coloring it [John Cebollero], and a great letterer in Chris Eliopoulos on the book. What more could you ask for?"

When asked if there are any people who influence his work, or any creators with whom he'd like to work with someday, Quesada waxes enthusiastic. "I guess I could get on line with everybody who would like to collaborate with Frank Miller. I think that's everybody's dream. Frank is the guy who reintroduced me to comics, when I read *The Dark Knight Returns*, but...it seems that everybody who's in the industry at this point almost has the exact same story. Aside from the obvious guys like Jim Lee and Todd McFarlane, I really like Jae Lee's work; he's also a good friend. I like Greg Capullo's stuff, too, and I think the two Kubert boys are brilliant. I hate coming up with a list like this, because I know I'm going to miss somebody. I talked to Dave Gibbons at one point about collaborating on a short story, which would be fun. There's thousands of guys out there who I'd love to work with. I'd love to work with John Ostrander someday. I'm happy to actually be working with Mark Moretti. I don't think people realize what a talent he is. When I was working on *X-O* #0, and I really started to receive Valiant comics, I read *Eternal Warrior*, and said to myself, 'Who is writing this thing, it's such a great book!' So I talked to Bob, he introduced me to Mark, and I said, 'Bob, someday I'd like to work with Mark.' He said, 'Sure. No problem.' Bob was originally slated to write *Ninjak*, but his workload got to be a little too much. Bob actually wanted to handle *Dr. Mirage* instead, so he asked me how I felt about Mark being the scripter on *Ninjak*. I said, 'That's great. I didn't even wanna work with you, Bob.' So that was it."

While discussing his take on today's "hot artists," he doesn't seem as enthused. "There will always be guys resting on their laurels. Who am I to say that, if I didn't get this tremendous paycheck tomorrow for one book that I've done, I wouldn't do the same thing. It's hard to say, unless you're in that position. If I get a big check like that, I might just say 'screw it!' I may end up on a beach somewhere with an umbrella and a drink. Either that, or, a year from now, I'll be in rehab.

"One thing that I'm disappointed with in the creator-owned field is the lack of chances being taken. I don't use this as a blanket statement for all those guys who have taken on creator-owned projects. I think some of them have been doing brilliant stuff, and some have tried to reach beyond [the established] boundaries. Some of them have put out some really fun, fun books. But for the most part, I find it all to be a rehash of the same thing. I mean, how many times can we redesign a character that looks like Wolverine, Superman, or Cable? They all start looking the same. Obvi-

At top: Multiple Multiple-Man.
At right: Bane hangs Robin out to dry, as White Sox watches on, from *Batman* #500.
Opposite: Batman hangs around in *Sword of Azrael* #1.

X-Factor, Multiple Man ™ & © Marvel Comics. Batman, Bane, Robin ™ & © DC Comics.

ously, we speak of Image here. For a company that's based on what's supposed to be the top seven or 10 creators in their class, there seems to be a serious lack of originality. I'd love to see them do more adventurous, off-the-beaten path stuff. I mean, be more experimental. I figure if I get that kind of leeway, where I don't have an editor pushing me and telling me what to do with the character, then hell, I'm going to go out and really try to do something different. Essentially, that's why I have yet to do a creator-owned thing. For the most part, when I come up with an idea, I'm never satisfied with it, because I think it's been done before. I'm searching for different angles. I'm still learning to draw and tell stories in this field."

This is not to say that Quesada hasn't had a hand in creating his fair share of characters. However, he doesn't take total credit for the creation of any of the characters he's had a hand in giving birth to. "These have all been collaborations with the writers," Quesada stresses. "It started with *The Ray* over at DC. Then Denny O'Neil and I worked on Azrael together. He had a particular vision of Azrael. The truth of the matter was, Azrael's father was what Denny envisioned Azrael as being. I sort of coaxed him against the idea, because, at one point, I had this idea for a creator-owned character who had these two big flaming blades that came out of these gauntlet things. I convinced Denny to approach it my way, and I think he's happy about it. I also created, along with Peter David, the character and the visuals for Random, in *X-Factor*. I thought he was really cool when we did him. Scott Lobdell and myself also created the visuals on Exodus. After Exodus, I did the visuals for the brand-new Batman."

"I was a musician way before I was a comic book artist; way before I even took artwork seriously, as in making a living at it."

When asked about other people's interpretations the new Batman, Quesada says that he doesn't mind artists drifting slightly away from his original vision. "I designed a very complex costume, but I figured people would simplify it. It doesn't bother me, as long as they stay pretty much within the realm of what I designed. It's really an editorial decision anyway; it's certainly not mine to make. I just hope these guys have fun with it. My ears actually ring at night, probably from artists working late at night saying, 'That s.o.b. Quesada, why did he design this thing like this?' Hey, I don't have to draw it monthly," he laughs. "I designed a real simple character with Ninjak."

While Quesada also created the visuals for Solar, the Destroyer, there are two characters prevalent throughout much of his work whom he takes no credit for creating—his two cats, White Sox and Skeeter. "I've got two cats, and if anybody wants to know what they look like, look on the cover of *Sword of Azrael* #1. Nobody ever notices, but over on the Batman side of the gatefold, right above Batman's head, you'll see my two mascots." You'll also find evidence of these two mammoth cats (18 and 22 pounds respectively) in *The Ray* and *X-Factor*, among other Quesada-penciled books. "White Sox sometimes ghosts my backgrounds while I'm not home—what can I say?" (Evidence of this can be found in the introduction to the price guide in *Wizard* #24.)

While *Ninjak* is the project which occupies most of Quesada's time these days, he has other interests outside of his artwork. In what he refers to as his spare time, he's also a musician. "I play a little, I sing a little, I do a little choreographed dance number...well, I actually don't do that," he says. "I was a musician way before I was a comic book artist; way before I even took artwork seriously, as in making a living at it." He pulls no punches when discussing why he doesn't pursue it with the fervor he used to. "This may sound incestuous, but [Valiant Publisher] Steve Massarsky used to be my manager when he [was] still in music; we were shopping stuff around to all the major labels. But the music industry sucks; it's so subjective. There's nothing worse than being a struggling musician. It's the loneliest job in the world, because you can be damn good and never get noticed. In comic books, if you're damn good, you generally get noticed. I still play: my band's gearing up again, we're going to start playing around again; who knows what will happen? We've had numerous offers from some independent labels, but the independent route doesn't really make much sense for me. I make much more doing comic books."

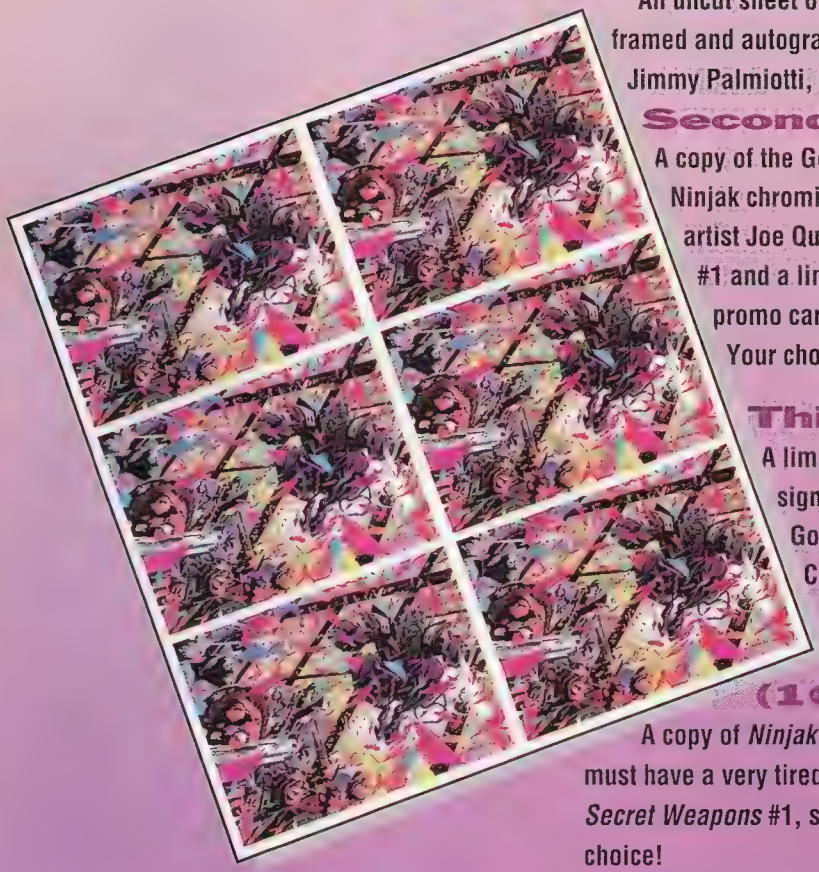
The music industry might not hold the key to the future of Joe Quesada, but there's no doubt as to which project he's extremely ecstatic about—*Ninjak*. He tells us a little about the storyline. "Ninjak is essentially one of the two most brilliant people in the Valiant universe, along with his evil doppelganger, Dr. Augustus Silk. Silk is so off-the-wall, we really have a real cool Joker/Batman kind of chemistry going on here. Ninjak is Colin King, this rich playboy kind of guy, who's also a world class botanist, raising prized flowers as a hobby. He enjoys his gardening, he's a refined gentleman, yet manly. Dr. Silk, on the other hand, is the most disgusting, appalling thing you could ever imagine."

Quesada warns readers that he's promising *Ninjak* will be no ordinary series, and feels that it will probably be one of the most exciting books on the shelves when it debuts in November. "I don't think Valiant is going to do this, but I think they should be putting a 'Surgeon General's Warning' on this book, because people are just gonna spontaneously combust when they read it," he says. "Kids in comic shops are just gonna go 'BOOM,' and that'll be it!"

Regarding the creative staff of the book, "The Q," as Quesada is affectionately called, adds, "John is going to color this thing so loud, Jimmy's going to ink this thing like a madman, and this book is gonna be deadly...just plain deadly. That's why they have to wrap the first issue in chromium—it's gonna be that hot! People are going to ask John who he is at conventions, and he'll say, 'I color *Ninjak*,' and—BOOM—they're just going to explode on the spot."

Quesada gives fans a word of advice concerning *Ninjak*: "Just be careful. Wear an asbestos suit when you read it—there's that kind of heat behind this book!"

WIZARD™ Contest



Grand Prize (1)

An uncut sheet of the *Ninjak* #1 chromium cover, framed and autographed by artists Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, and John Cebollero

Second Prize (15)

A copy of the Gold *Ninjak* #1 and a limited edition Ninjak chromium promo card, both signed by artist Joe Quesada; or a copy of the Gold *Turok* #1 and a limited edition Turok chromium promo card, both signed by artist Bart Sears! Your choice!

Third Prize (50)

A limited edition Ninjak chromium card signed by Joe Quesada, or a copy of the Gold *Dr. Mirage* #1 signed by Bernard Chang! Your choice!

Fourth Prize (100)

A copy of *Ninjak* #1 signed by Joe Quesada (who must have a very tired hand at this point), or a copy of *Secret Weapons* #1, signed by Joe St. Pierre! Your choice!

NINJAK ™ & © 1993 VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS INC.

1.) What is Bloodshot's new secret identity?

2.) Who does Ninjak work for?

3.) Who is Natalie Toynbee?

4.) Who does the Eternal Warrior aid from time to time?

5.) Who was responsible for Ken Clarkson losing his left arm?

6.) What is Archer's first name?

7.) Who was Shadowman's housekeeper?

CONTEST RULES

Answer the above questions in the boxes supplied. In each answer you will find a colored letter. After you have completed all the questions, the colored letters from the answers, when unscrambled, will form the Contest Code Word. Write this word on the official entry form supplied below, a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard and send to:

WIZARD CONTEST #28
P.O. Box 5001
Monsey, NY 10952-8001

Enter Now To Win!

Official Wizard Contest #28

Hey!
Consider me entered!
I want to win some of this cool stuff!

Name (please print clearly) Age

Phone #

Home Address

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Address

City State Zip

Grand Prize

☐ Chromium *Ninjak* #1

2nd Prize Choice
check one

☐ Gold *Ninjak* #1
☐ *Turok* #1

3rd Prize Choice
check one

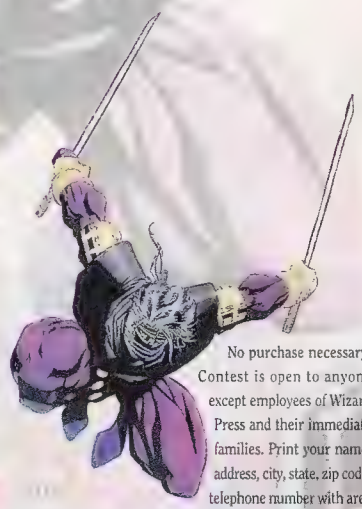
☐ Ninjak Card
☐ *Dr. Mirage* #1

4th Prize Choice
check one

☐ *Ninjak* #1
☐ *Secret Weapons* #1

Unscrambled Answer

WIZARD CLUE: An old man



No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and their immediate families. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name and adress of the store where you purchase your comics, and the Unscrambled Answer on an "Official Entry Form," a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry individually to "*Wizard* Contest #28," P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 1,1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 15, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Wizard Contest 28 Winners," P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

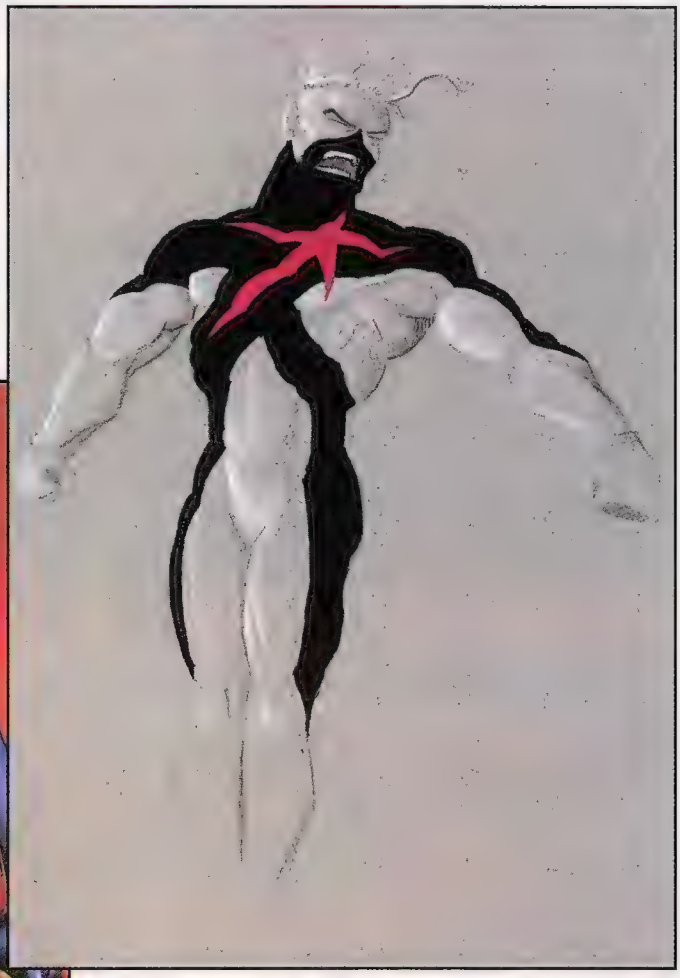
the Drawing board

The showcase of comic book fan art.

All printed submissions this month win a copy of *Supreme* #1 signed by Brian Murray, a copy of *Warriors of Plasm* #1 signed by Dave Lapham, and a copy of *Wildstar* #1 signed by Jerry Ordway. The two runners-up will receive all that cool stuff plus a copy of the Gold *X-Men 2099* #1 signed by Ron Lim. The best entry this month will win everything listed above plus a copy of the Gold *Turok* #1 signed by Bart Sears. Congratulations to all!

1st Place!

WILDSTAR by Jason Kunkel - Age 19
Petersburg, Virginia



WILDSTAR ™ & © AL GORDON & JERRY ORDWAY.

X-O MANOWAR ™ & © VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

2nd Place!

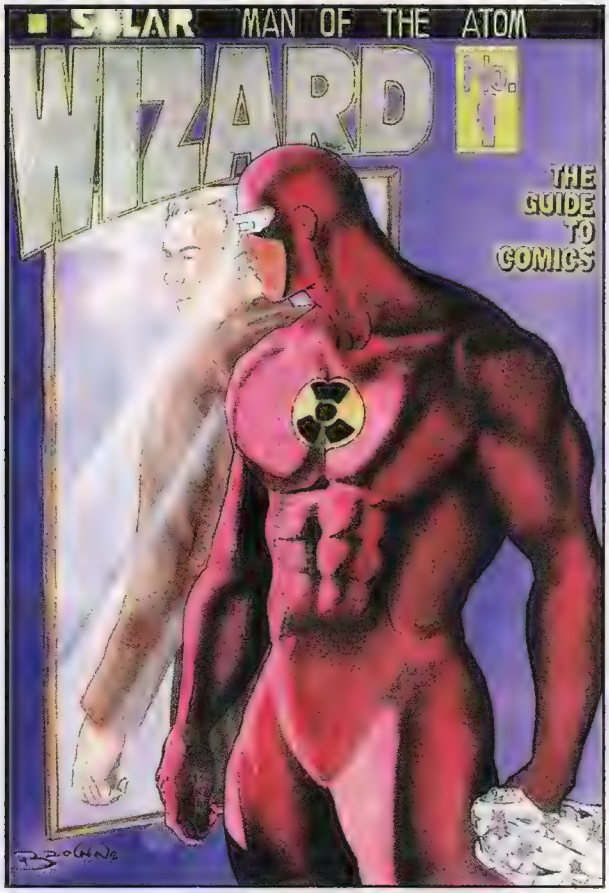
X-O MANOWAR by Spencer Ledford - Age 22
Summerville, South Carolina

Julian Scott - Age 21
Houston, Texas

BLOODSHOT ™ & © VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS.

3rd Place!

SOLAR by Patrick Brown - Age 29
Queens Village, New York



SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM ™ & © WESTERN PUBLISHING.

BLACK OPAL ™ & © ROGER BECKETT.

Roger Beckett
Detroit, Michigan

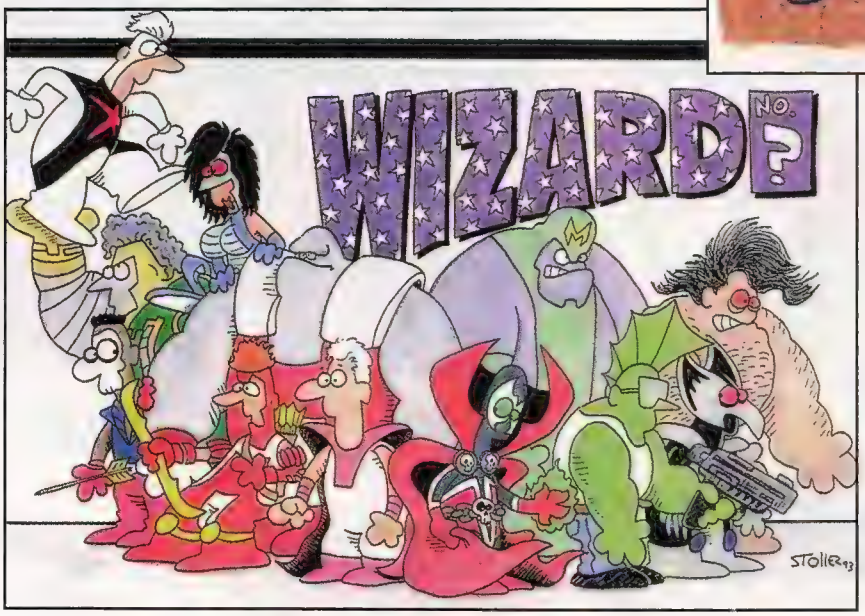


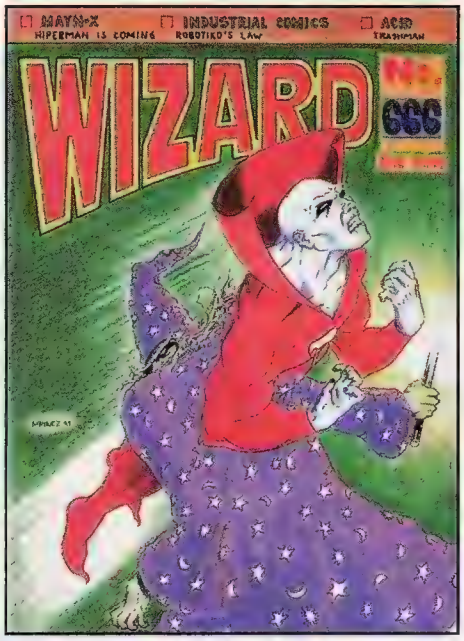
IMAGE CHARACTERS SHOWN ™ & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

Adam Stoller - Age 29
Hillsboro, Oregon

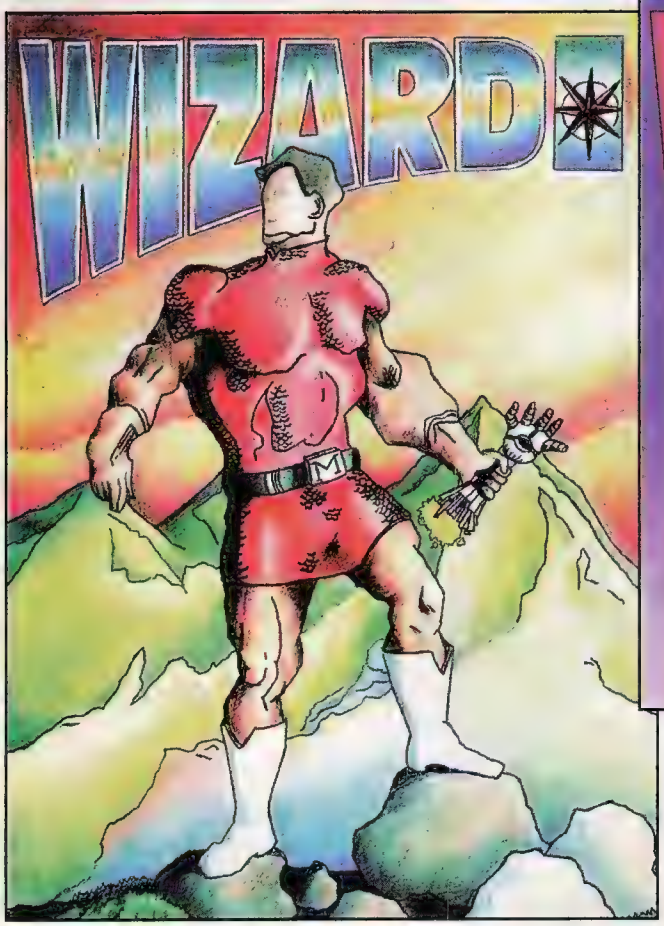
RIPTIDE ™ & © ROB LIEFELD.

Anneth Lagamo - Age 14
Makakilo, Hawaii

Ignacio Maynez - Age 23
San Diego, California



DEADMAN ™ & © DC COMICS.



MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER ™ & © WESTERN PUBLISHING.

SABRETOOTH, WOLVERINE'S BLOODY SEVERED HEAD ™ & © MARVEL COMICS.

Tak Toyoshima
Brookline, Massachusetts

Quinn Taylor - Age 13
Greenport, New York

Stephen Pennimpede - Age 25
Danvers, Massachusetts

Charles Hermosilla - Age 25
Willie Manglobang- Age 24
Dedado, Guam

PSYLOCKE ™ & © MARVEL COMICS.

AZRAEL ™ & © DC COMICS.

CHERRY POPTART ™ & © LARRY WELZ.

Byron Valera - Age 18
Baza Gardens, Guam

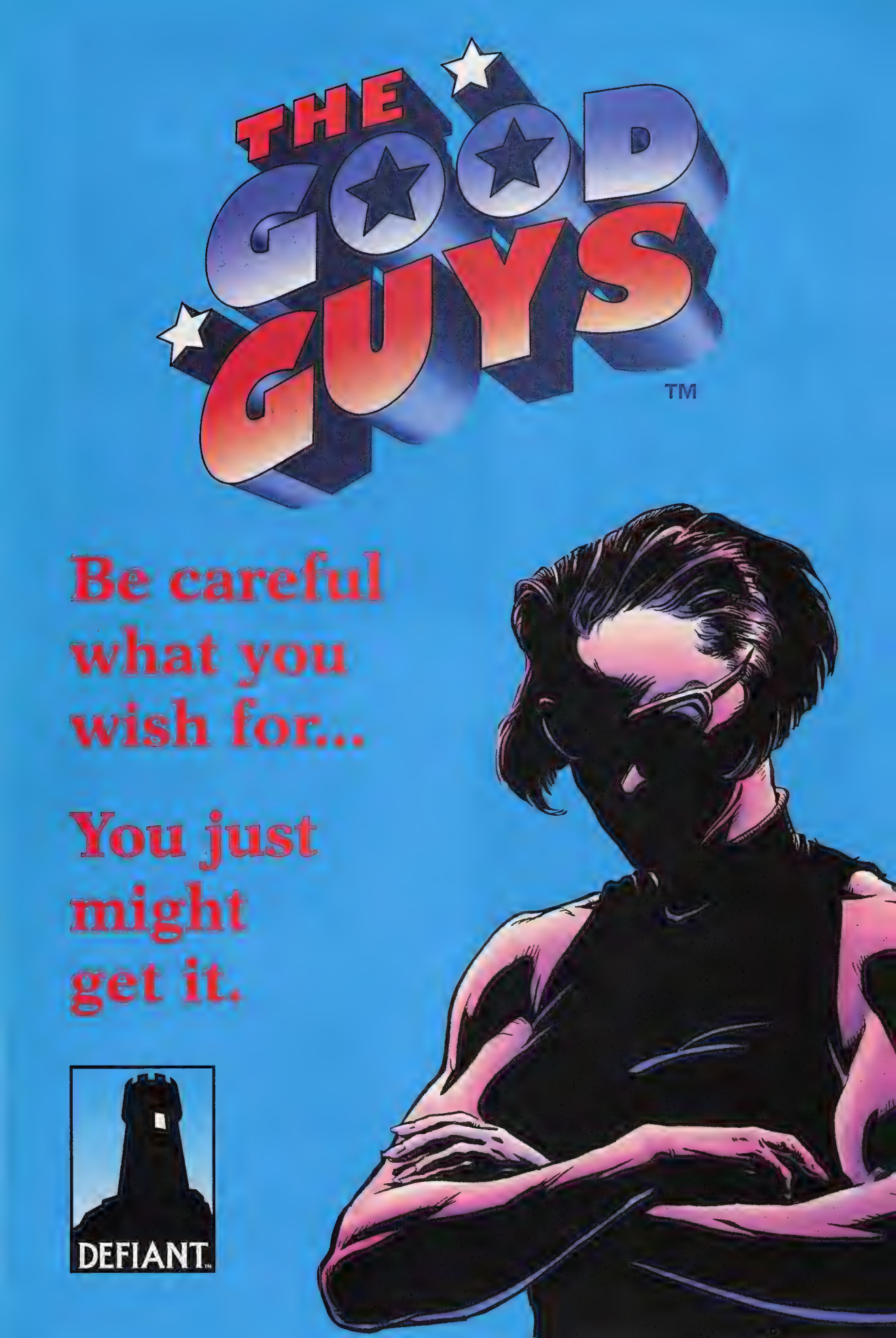
ZEALOT & VOODOO ™ & © AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT.

Joseph Gould - Age 20
Weymouth, Massachusetts

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:

The Drawing Board
C/O Wizard Press
100 Red Schoolhouse Rd. Building B-1
Chestnut Ridge N.Y. 10977

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, bloody finger, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. All entries are non-returnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good Luck!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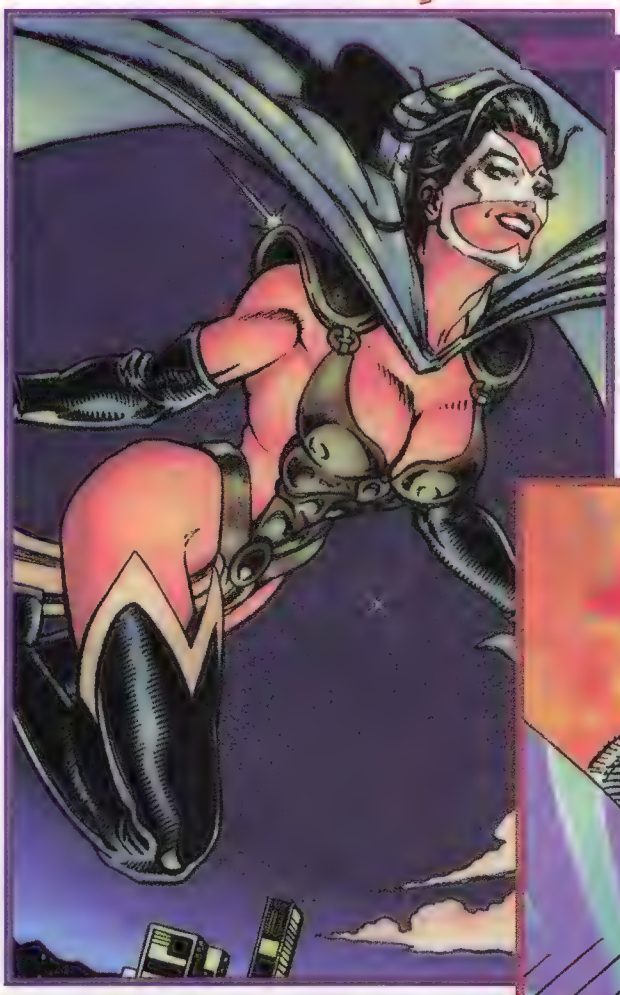
You just might get it.
DEFIANT™



Babe — Mantra

This is a first here in Hunk & Babe. Now, don't get me wrong, we've had some pretty odd folk come through these pages. Thunder gods, cyborgs, Amazons, mutants, hey, every day's a party, but Mantra here is a first. Though at first she certainly looks like a Babe, she's...I mean he's...really a guy. Y'see, she's...its real name is Lukasz, and it's a spirit (or something) that can enter and possess other people's bodies, and right now it's in a her, although it is a he, which makes this the most confusing Babe entry ever. Still, a babe's a babe.

Hunk — Ripclaw

Straight from the pages of *Cyberforce* comes Robert Bearclaw, better known to you comic fans as Warbla...no, wait, that's the WildC.A.T.s guy, so this must be Ripclaw, the other pointy finger guy. Aside from his metal shapeshifting hands, the tattoos (makeup?) on his face, his very white body (depending on who's coloring him at the time), and his slightly hairy bod (Robert Bearclaw...Italian?), he's your normal run of the mill class-A stud.

She-Hulk & Wonder Man™ & ©1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

Ripclaw™ & © Top Cow Productions. Mantra™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH
BART SEARS

Hi-de-ho, neighbors, and welcome to BRUTES and BABES. It's late, I'm tired, the check is in the mail, and GOD save the QUEEN! There, now that that's out of my system, let's get down to business. First, a special tip of the *Wizard* cap to Joe Quesada for filling in on such short notice for BRUTES and BABES last month. Thanks, Joe! Anyway, this month, you and I are going to take an in-depth look at...

BREAKING DOWN A PAGE

SECTION 1:
THE PLOT

BABE and NASTYGUY continue their fight on top of the partially demolished skyscraper. BABE is standing triumphantly over NASTYGUY, having just finished thrashing him to within an inch of his life, when, suddenly, seemingly with a life of its own, some of the skyscraper's wreckage slams into BABE from behind, knocking her for a loop. NASTYGUY scrambles towards BABE, his eyes suddenly blazing with power, and, putting one hand around her throat, he dangles her over the edge of the building, crying out with maniacal glee.

SECTION 2:

You might have noticed that this plot is slightly different from those that have appeared previously in BRUTES and BABES. I wrote those plots so that each sentence was taken to be an individual panel, whereas this plot is much more typical—in my experience—of the type of plot which you might receive from a comic book publisher.

The first thing that I do in a case like this is pull out my skinny red marker and scribble all over the plot—not for fun, but to work out exactly how many panels I need, what should be in those panels, and what type of panels would work best, i.e., long shot, close-up, et cetera.

This is the point at which you must first start to clearly visualize the page. Mentally picturing the page is difficult, but necessary: it gives you a solid base from which to start, a framework of sorts. If you can create a mental picture, however sketchy, you need never sit down to draw on a fully blank piece of paper...

SECTION 3: THE PLOT

BABE and NASTYGUY continue their fight on top of the partially demolished skyscraper. BABE is standing triumphantly over NASTYGUY, (1) having just finished thrashing him to within an inch of his life, (2) when, suddenly, seemingly with a life of its own, some of the skyscraper's wreckage slams into BABE from behind, knocking her for a loop. (3) NASTYGUY scrambles towards BABE, (4) his eyes suddenly blazing with power, and, (5) putting one hand around her throat, he dangles her over the edge of the building, crying out with maniacal glee. (6)

1 MLS

2 M.C.U. BABE TELLING NASTYGUY OFF. (INDICATE WRECKAGE)

4 (EYES BLAZING)

3 -POWER-

5 C.U. NASTYGUY, REACHING

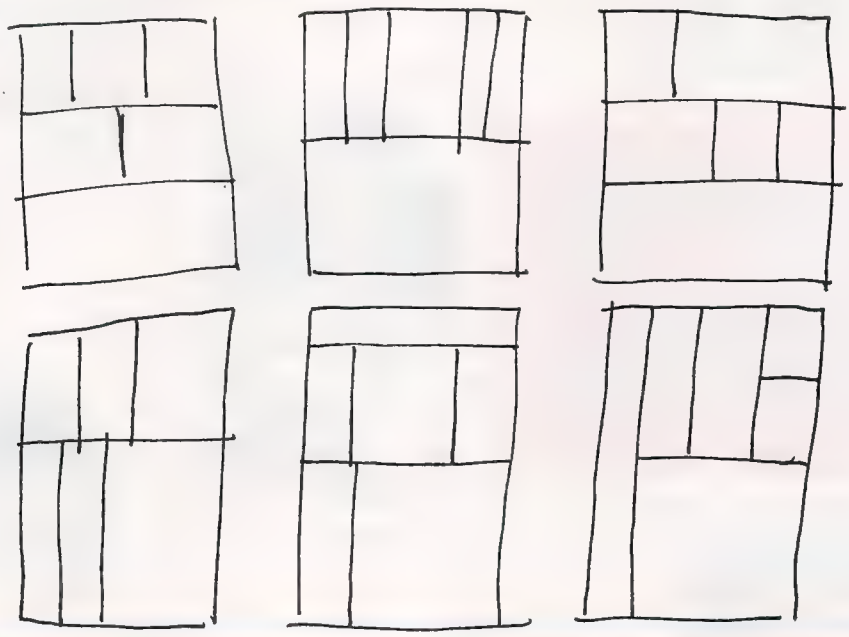
6 BIG SHOT

Please note that at this point I had to add on and expand things. There was a flow to the original plot, but it needed clarifying if it was to be preserved in the illustrations. Also, note that none of this is written in stone; if a better idea strikes me later on, at any stage, well, out with the old and in with the new.

SECTION 4:

Now it's time to start mentally visualizing your final page on the paper in front of you. At this point, I am not at all concerned with pretty finishing techniques or style, and I'm only partially interested in proportion and basic drawing. Storytelling, clarity of same, and flow are the big concerns here. As you look at the drawings on the next couple of pages, you'll see that they are crude, but that they are exactly what's needed to break down a page. Once you've accomplished this, you can start doing your rough pencils and finished pencils.

We've figured out how many panels we need on this page; now we have to figure out how to place them. You may have noticed that, on the annotated plot, I've labeled the last panel "BIG SHOT," which means that this panel, panel six, will be the largest panel and the 'thrust' or payoff panel of the page. Hence, we'll start with that panel and work around it.



SECTION 5:

There are six different six-panel layouts which could suit this situation (see above). They might all work equally well, so now it's a matter of personal preference. It's important to realize that there is no definitive rule as to which panel layout is right. When drawing comics—and most everything else, for that matter—it's important to realize that there are rules and guidelines which help define your optimum end result, but that the end result should, and will, always be different. If you follow the rules in an intelligent and creative fashion, then your end result—whatever it is—will be right. The trick is to MASTER THE RULES!

I've decided to work with the panel layout in the center of the top line. I like the simplicity of the layout, and I also like the rhythm that it builds from panel one through the final panel: Bop-Bop-BAM—Bop-Bop-BIG BAM. This fits with the pacing that began developing when I broke down the plot.

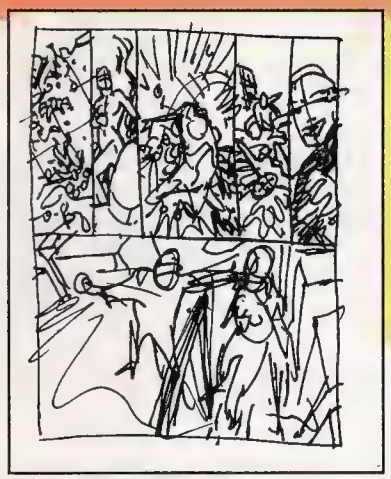
SECTION 6:

Next, we have to work on roughing out the panel interiors. We have to remain aware of proportion and anatomy as well as perspective and good basic drawing—but right now, when we're roughing things out, those elements are not key. "What are the keys?" you might ask. STORYTELLING AND DESIGN are the keys. When roughing out a page, you must tell the story clearly. If you can't tell what's going on at this stage, all of the pretty drawing you throw on over it won't make any difference. As always, clarity is the most important aspect of drawing powerful comics.

Design is a term used infrequently within the context of comics; when it is employed, it usually signifies the visual design of a character. But every comic book page that's ever been drawn by anyone has been designed, sometimes beautifully and sometimes not so beautifully. Sometimes the design has been crafted thoughtfully and caringly; other times it's been shaped without any thought or care at all.

The design of a page deals with the way the shapes and elements relate to each other, and with how they relate to the negative space (i.e., the parts of a drawing which are empty). A well-designed page will be a beautiful page, whereas a poorly-designed page will be confusing and hard to read. Design deals with flow, with directing the reader's eye to go where you want it to go and when you want it to get there. Design also uses placement of blacks to create flow, but we won't be dealing with that today.

Keep in mind when designing your panel layouts that the panels must work together, pulling the reader first through itself and then sending him along to the next panel, and continuing this through to the last panel on the page. You can make the design as simple or as involved as you like, but generally, for comics, the simpler a design is, and the easier it is to read, the better. Remember: simple does not mean boring!



SECTION 7:

Here we have three quick, rough layouts to look at and consider. This first one was the initial layout, very rough and sloppy, sort of like thinking in pencil. The only panel that I really like from this is the first one; it seems to set the stage pretty well, although you have no idea that they are on top of a skyscraper. Panel two seems to need more ground. Panels three, four, and five are all right...panel six may be a good idea, but it's too rough to say yes or no at this stage.

My ideas were much clearer in this second layout. The first panel lets us know that they are on top of a building (although not necessarily a skyscraper), but we are too far away; I want to see more of the characters right here. Two is good: we see some of the floor and more rubble. Three is good: we can see the rubble zoom right up off the floor to smack BABE. In four we see BABE slam into more rubble in the background as NASTYGUY scrambles forward. Five has NASTYGUY reaching forward menacingly. Panel six works pretty well...we can see BABE's in trouble.

Here in the third rough layout, I fixed (sort of) stuff from the first two layouts, and tried a couple of different approaches. Panel one shows all we need to see: the two characters, the rooftop, the rubble, and the surrounding skyscrapers. Panel two is in tighter on BABE—it could work here because panel one clearly defined the two characters and their relative positions. Panel three is okay. Four shows BABE in the background rubble, while NASTYGUY scrambles towards her. Five is in tight on NASTYGUY, who is reaching menacingly. In panel six, I tried the reverse angle of my previous attempts. It's okay, but for this shot, I prefer a downshot.

SECTION 8:

To the left, I have composited the rough layouts into one image. Over that there is a flow arrow. This is the direction that the reader's eye should travel on this page. Check it out, follow the storytelling, and see what, if any, changes you would make. Go back and read the original plot on the first page and see if this captures the writer's ideas.

SECTION 9:

Here is the final rough layout. It's not really too different from the last, but there are some subtle changes to note. To help with the flow, the head in panel five was tilted and the fingers were angled slightly differently. Some changes were made for reasons of flow, others for the sake of clarity, others in the interests of storytelling. Look at it, pick it apart, and figure out what you like and don't like. Try to find valid reasons for everything; that should help you learn and understand.

A little aside here: I wrote the original plot for this differently than I normally do. If I had any choice, I would have broken this plot up into two pages to assist the story's flow and dramatic pacing. But in comics, you must adapt: you don't always have the time or freedom to do things your way. Anyways, I hope that the things written here make some sense to you, because you're going to be doing it right here, real soon. Because it's time for...

THE SECOND MIGHTY BRUTES AND BABES ART CONTEST

Here we go... All you need to do is submit two penciled pages, ready for inking. That's it, that's all: simple, simple, simple. There are two age categories, under 13 and 13 and older—that's all I can deal with right now—and there will be prizes awarded for each category. The deadline is January 31, 1994, which should be fair. (Okay, maybe this contest isn't so simple. But it should be a lot of fun.) The actual rules are below.

THE PLOT!

Characters: MAN-BAT; the "new" BATMAN

PAGE ONE

PANEL 1: Establishing shot—night—outside the Gotham Museum of Natural History. A man-sized, bat-shaped thing streaks into the shadows on the rooftop. (This is MAN-BAT.)

PANEL 2: Pull in closer, but shift focus to the ornate rooftop of a building across the way from the museum. A dark, bat-like shape is moving out of the shadows. (This is BATMAN.)

PANEL 3: Pull in even closer. We see clearly now that the figure in panel two is BATMAN, and that he has thrown a Batarang, with cable attached, towards the museum, high up, so that he can swing across.

PANEL 4: Pull in closer, to a CU of BATMAN, who has that blank metal mask. Even so, we can see that he is angry and determined, and that he is moving...probably getting ready to swing.

PANEL 5: BATMAN swings towards the rooftop of the museum.

PAGE TWO

PANEL 1: BATMAN lands on the top of the museum, silent and confident.

PANEL 2: A bat-like shape leaps from out of nowhere, enfolding BATMAN in its arms and wings and feet...

PANEL 3: The two struggling figures roll to the rooftop, hands and claws punching and slashing, et cetera...

PANEL 4: With a surge of power, BATMAN throws his foe from him; MAN-BAT, of course, tumbles away.

PANEL 5: MCU BATMAN pausing, ready but stunned...

PANEL 6: SHOT past the startled BATMAN, looking at a full figure shot of MAN-BAT, bloodied and angry, teeth bared, wings flared, and spoiling for a fight.

Well, there you have it...it's straightforward, but open to a lot of interpretation. Good luck!

THE PRIZES!

Remember, there's at least one winner in each age category, so there's double the prizes to be won! C'mon, sharpen those little pencils and get crackin'.

Grand Prize (One winner in each category)

An all-expense paid trip for two people to Syracuse, N.Y., to attend a private art class taught by Bart Sears! Grand prize winners will coordinate the date of their trip with Wizard Press. If the winner requires a legal guardian, one must accompany him or her.

Second Prize (One winner in each category)

An original Bart Sears Batman vs. Man-Bat drawing, framed and personally autographed from Bart to you!

Third Prize (Five winners in each category)

A set of the three-issue *Violator* mini-series; a set of *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #21-23 (the "Faith" mini-series); *Turok* #1-2; and a Turok chromium card, all autographed by Bart Sears!

RULES:

All right, here they are:

1. You must complete both pages.
2. Do the originals on an 11" x 17" piece of paper (preferably Bristol) within a 10" x 15" border. There is no bleed, so you must stay within that area.
3. Use pencil. If you are going to ink it, please get a good Xerox copy of the pencils to size first, because you will be judged on the penciling (storytelling, et cetera), not the inking.
4. Send in only a good quality copy of the pages. Please put your name, age, and address on all copies that you send. (If you must send in the original, please understand that I have neither the time nor the manpower to return it to you. Sorry.)
5. Avoid folding the artwork if possible, and mail your entry to: BRUTES and BABES Contest 2, P.O. Box 761, Monsey, N.Y. 10952-0761

NOTE: You must put your age on each page. Remember, there are two age categories: under 13 and 13 and over. Only your age at the time you mail the entry counts.

CLOSING:

Thanks for reading. I hope you enjoy this contest, and I can't wait to start seeing your entries! Best of luck, and keep drawing! NB

EAT. SLEEP.

BUST A FEW HEADS!

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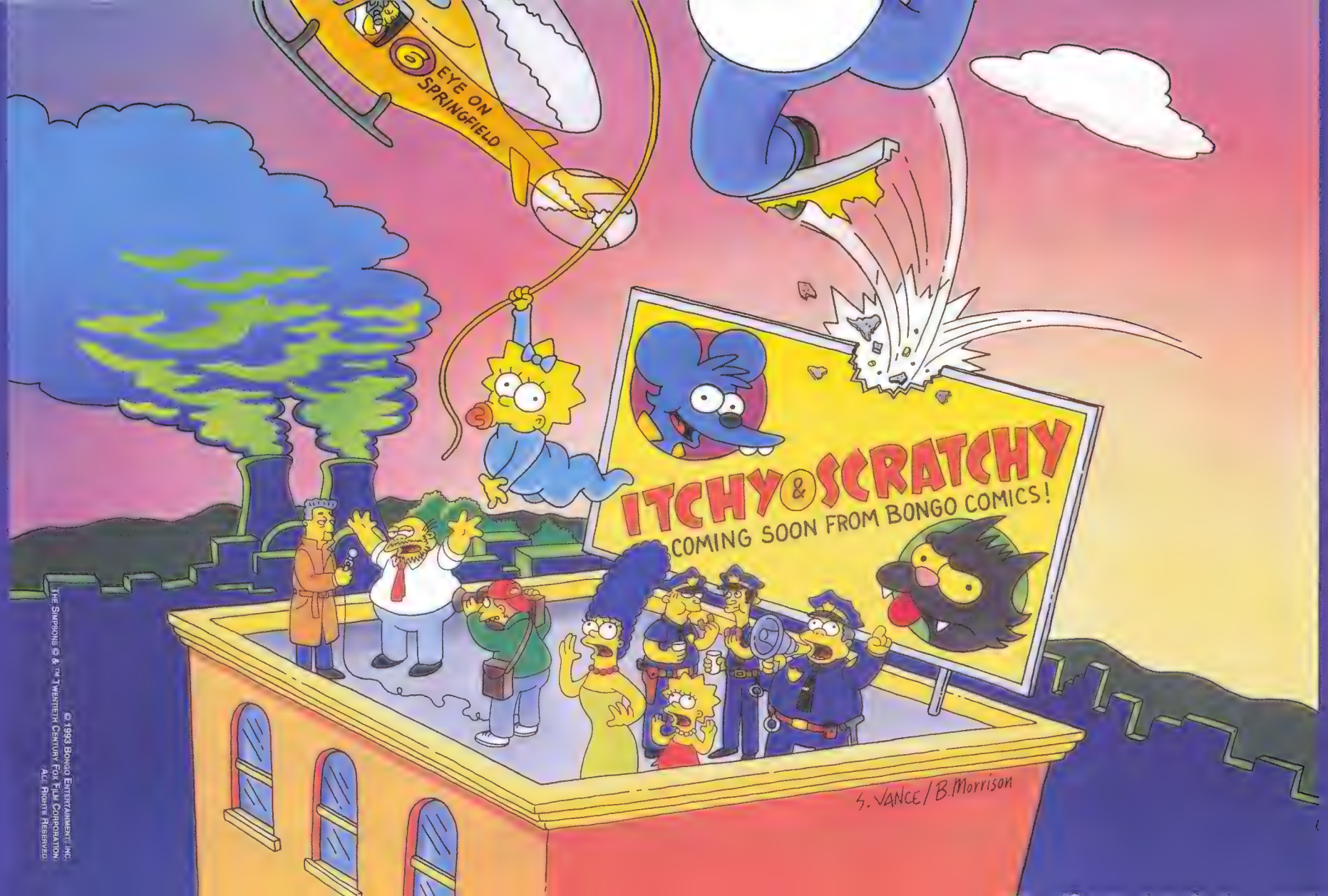
MATT GROENING



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A NEW ERA NEEDS A NEW KIND OF HERO

GEN 13

ART
J. SCOTT CAMPBELL
ALEX GARNER

STORY
JIM LEE
BRANDON CHOI

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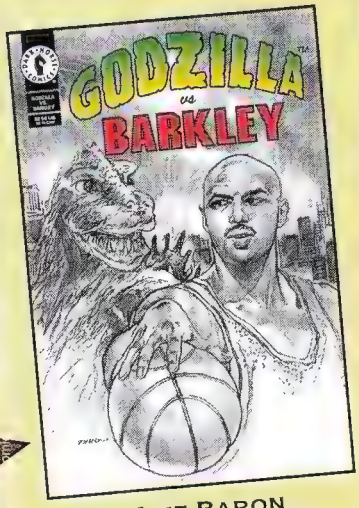
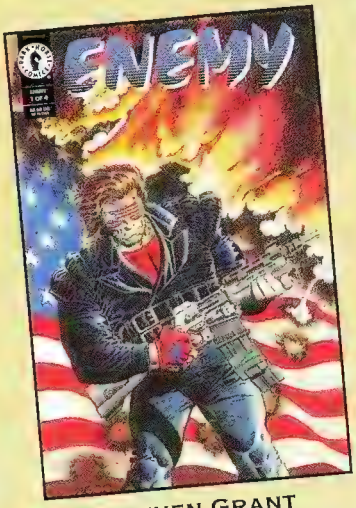
HOLIDAY WISH LIST

DECEMBER 1993 FROM DARK HORSE COMICS

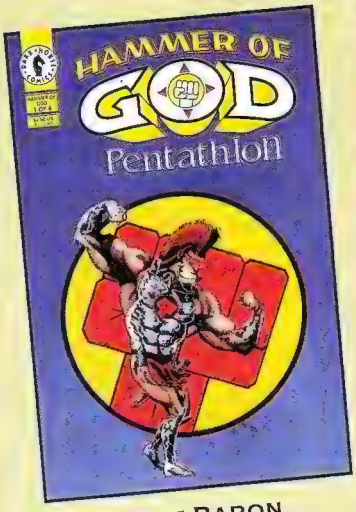


MIKE BARON
JEFF BUTLER
DAVE DORMAN



STEVEN GRANT
CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK
MIKE ZECK

MIKE W. BARR
BRADLEY C. RADER



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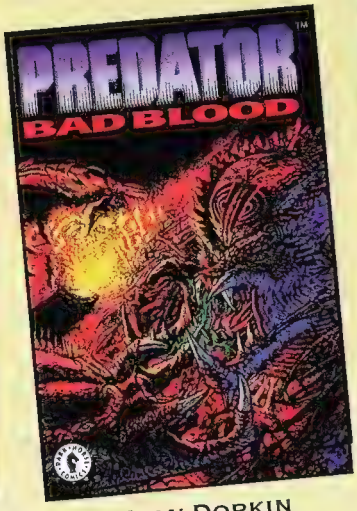
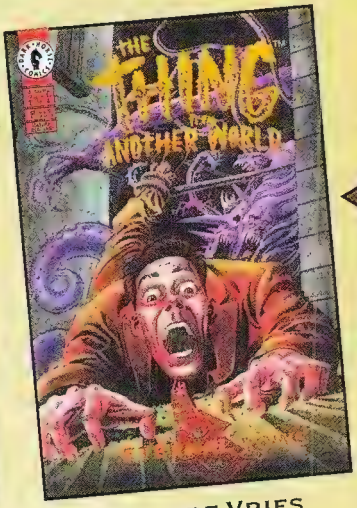
NEIL VOKES
JAY GELDHOF



EVAN DORKIN
DEREK THOMPSON
CHRIS WARNER



DAVID DE VRIES
PAUL GULACY

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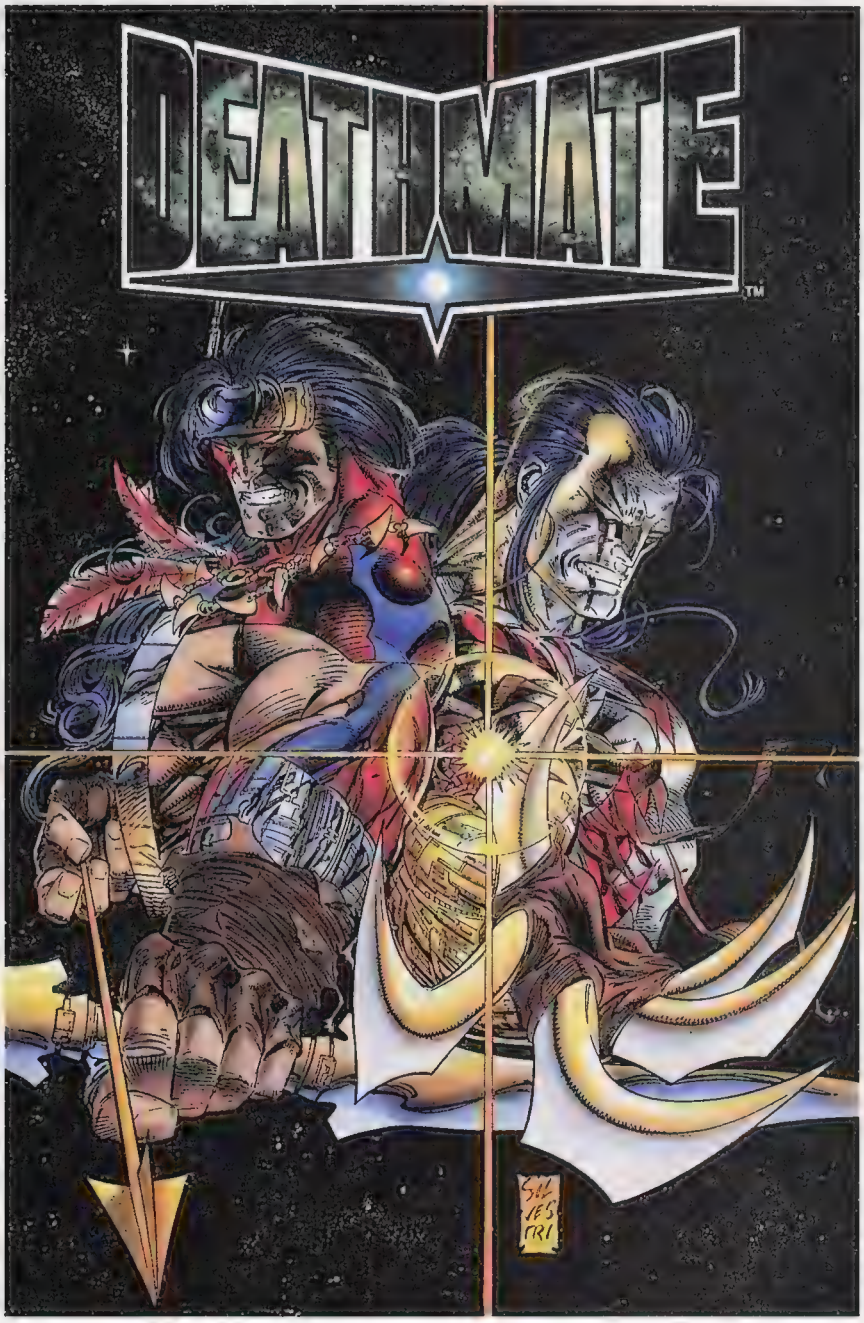

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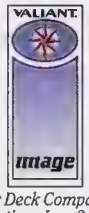

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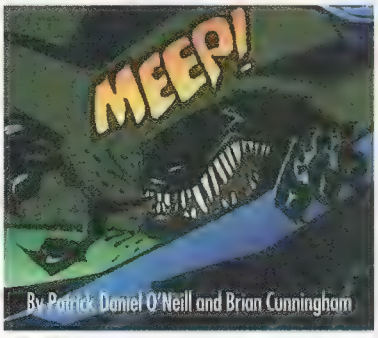
Chronicling the Maxx

Sam Kieth and William Messner-Loebs discuss the collaborative efforts needed to bring the Maxx to "life"



By Patrick Daniel O'Neill and Brian Cunningham

William Messner-Loebs first met Sam Kieth at the 1983 San Diego Comic Con, while both were rushing to see the late Harvey Kurtzman's storytelling seminar. Although they never got to see the seminar—it was full—they both started talking about comics. It was the start of a long and fruitful friendship.

Messner-Loebs first gained prominence with his creator-owned *Journey* in 1983, which led to his scripting Comico's *Johnny Quest* and drawing DC's *Wasteland* anthology. Afterwards, he wrote the *Flash* for four years and then jumped to *Wonder Woman*, both for DC. Kieth gained a name for himself by inking Matt Wagner's *Mage* for Comico and the first three issues of DC's *Manhunter*, and by penciling the first seven issues of *Sandman*. After that, Kieth joined Messner-Loebs for their first collaboration, two *Epicurus the Sage* graphic novels for Piranha Press, which met with critical praise. He was catapulted to stardom by *Incredible Hulk* #367 and a Wolverine story for *Marvel Comics Presents*.

Now the two have been reunited by *The Maxx*, which is turning heads with its unusual subject matter and thought-provoking stories.

"Sam brought me on because I have a little more experience in terms of plotting a comic book than he had. He had a lot of ideas and he wanted to be able to do a comic that was his own. I'm sort of an editor/mentor." That's how writer William Messner-Loebs describes his contribution to *The Maxx*, the ongoing comic book which he works on with artist/creator Sam Kieth. "He calls me up, we talk about what he would like in that issue, and I give him my opinion—whether there's too much or too little story to fit in 22 pages... I sort of act as a sounding board for his ideas."

Kieth says his choice of Messner-Loebs was natural, even though the team-up occurred in a somewhat roundabout fashion. "I approached other people about doing it. I talked with Sarah Byam (of *Black Canary*) about it," he recalls. "But what it really comes down to is—y'know when George Lucas and Steven Spielberg wanted to make *Raiders of the Lost Ark*? First they thought of Harrison Ford for Indiana Jones; then they said, 'No, no, no.' They went through a whole bunch of other actors and they wound up with Harrison Ford."

What is it about Messner-Loebs that finally made him the obvious choice? "I already know Bill. I've already worked with Bill [notably on *Epicurus the Sage*]. It's like we're a married couple, in a way," Kieth laughs.

"I had a lot of ideas to get in, and, while I don't yet have the skill to write, I wanted to get as close to that as possible," he continues. "The only person I could think of that would help me but also get out of my way enough to do it was Bill. Just on a personal level, he would say, 'I think you need to be careful of this,' and I'd say, 'Fine.'"

Messner-Loebs says that, after their initial phone conversation, Kieth draws the book and then faxes the finished

MAXX AND ALL ARTWORK AND CHARACTERS SHOWN ™ & © SAM KIETH.

pages to him. Then Kieth calls back and the two discuss the gist of the dialogue. Finally, Messner-Loebs writes the script. "Basically, we're making the phone company very happy," he chuckles.

It's a big contrast from their last joint project, *Epicurus*. "On *Epicurus*, I basically had the stories in my head—I'd been thinking about it for quite a while," Messner-Loebs says. "I wrote the full script. At that point, Sam had ideas about what he'd like to draw; he asked me if I'd put in scenes of cows, so I did; he was very interested in drawing mountains at one point, so I put in mountain scenes. In terms of the narrative content, because it was so heavily influenced by Greek myth, I was the main driving force. Sam did influence the fact that Plato appeared so often—he was concerned that the greatest philosopher of all time was being played as a complete idiot. He felt he would not go to heaven if we didn't make Plato a more well-rounded character."

The Maxx, according to the writer, is a completely different kettle of fish. "It's a challenging collaboration sometimes," Messner-Loebs admits. "Sam is one of the most serious-minded people I've ever worked with. He's not only concerned with what we're doing, but why we're doing it—much more so than the usual artist. At one point, he's saying, 'I'd like to draw cows…' but on another level, I discovered he's much more conversant in quantum physics than I am, and he explained how Mr. Gone works. There are strange and swirly depths to the boy."

Kieth is equally pleased with the teamwork. "I'd say 90 percent of what gets on the page is mine. In the last issue we did, #6, Bill offered some helpful hints. By his own admission, he has a proclivity toward avoiding a linear plot as much as possible. But compared to me, he's the most linear guy I've ever met, because I want to stray all over the board.

"The question is always, 'How much is him and how much is me?' Well, how much of *Fantastic Four* was Stan Lee and how much Jack Kirby? How much of *Nexus* was Steve Rude, how much Mike Baron? You'll never know, you can never divide it up. Obviously, when you read *Epicurus* or *Journey*, it's completely Bill. I haven't written anything by myself, so you don't know how much is me. Hopefully, you will never have to," Kieth laughs.

Messner-Loebs describes his contributions as translation and interpretation, insisting that the ideas are all Kieth's. "In terms of how the characters speak—accent, the way in which the Maxx expresses himself—that's mostly me. The fact that the Maxx speaks his thoughts aloud is my largest contribution to the work," he notes. "The Isz, Mr. Gone, the Maxx—these are all Sam's ideas, and were, in fact, all heroes of their own series that never actually got drawn. Sam has been talking to me about Mr. Gone as a hero for at least the last eight years. I mostly try to get Sam to tell me exactly what he wants to say and make sure we're saying it in as clear a way as possible.

"Sam knows all these things, but like a lot of people who are beginning to write, it's important for him to know precisely what he wants to say. Gore Vidal was once asked the difference between being a writer and a politician. He said, 'Being a writer is trying to say exactly what you want to say and being a politician is trying to avoid saying exactly what you want to say.' It's not as easy as you might think to say exactly what you want to say. Very often, you're trying to say two things at once that are exactly contradictory, and it takes a certain amount of experience to realize that. It's one of the processes that makes a writer."

"I think it would be awfully painful for people to have to get the idea of what I'm trying to convey without Bill's input," Kieth interjects. "I know what I'm trying to say and I know what I want the characters to feel and I will actually suggest things to Bill. I'm trying to [avoid changing] what he writes just to be different… to avoid saying, 'I like what you've written, but here's what I wanted them to say; here's the reason I wanted them to say it.' Once you tear apart the words, you're left with what you're trying to say and the way you say it. I don't have any skill at the *way* I want to say it, but I do know what I want them to say."

Kieth says there are moments when he asks for changes in the dialogue, or makes them directly, and then runs the revised product past Messner-Loebs one more time. "I feel really nervous about doing it," he admits. "My job is not to get in the way or try to make it funnier or add characterization. I'm like a henchman, in a sense. I've asked Bill to be very magnanimous in both accepting my input and filtering it as well. If I say, 'I don't want it to say, "I'll jump," I want it to say, "I want a blender,"' Bill will say, 'I like that,' or 'I don't like that as much, because it doesn't convey what you're trying to do.'

"He wouldn't say, 'Dammit, that's my line! I wrote that line and I care deeply for it!' He'd just say, 'Is this conveying what you want to convey?'"

Messner-Loebs compares his work on *The Maxx* with Kieth to another medium: "I remember an essay about what a producer does—a producer is an

The Maxx: Living two lives.

audience of one, who sees the director's and the actors' work and can act as the audience early in the process," he says. "It's easy to be working on this stuff and—because you know the back story—not realize that you aren't succeeding in saying what you intend."

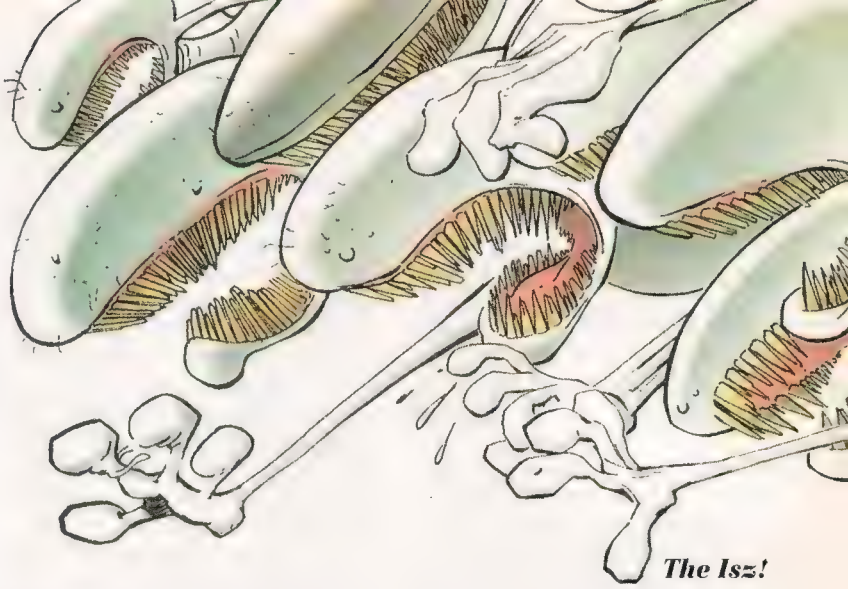
"I don't think Bill takes this all as seriously as I do," Kieth points out. "He's done a lot of stories and I think he feels *The Maxx* is my thing. It's my Mona Lisa to paint a mustache on, mine to screw up and mine to help. I'm paying him to help me do it. He always asks me, 'What is your goal this issue? What are you trying to do?'

"It's really hard to write something you give a damn about," Kieth acknowledges. "I swear, every issue, that I'm not going to give a damn about the next one and that I'll just churn it out. Every issue, I write this stuff down and send it to Bill. I'm tired, he's exhausted from analyzing every panel. In the end, I think it's very deep, and when the book comes out, it seems really trite to me after I read it."

The process changed somewhat with *The Maxx* #4, when Kieth took on more of the writing burden. "I was really nervous about that issue," he says. "I rewrote some stuff and it was the first time I didn't run it by Bill afterwards, because he said, 'I don't have a lot of time, so just do what you need to do.' I felt really vulnerable writing it myself. I would say, 'You didn't quite put your finger on it; essentially, I wanted this.' At some point, even Bill said, 'Well, then say it!'

"I was very afraid #4 would be one of the worst issues, because Bill started out writing one way, and I kept trying to point it back to what I was going for. There was big danger that the story would come across as an *ABC After-school Special* on suicide," Kieth goes on. "In the beginning, Bill said, 'Let's do something cheery and light,' because that's what he always wants to do. I said, 'Let's do something dark and deep and mature'—to which he answered, 'Mature is not dark and deep.'"

Keen-eyed readers will have noticed that *The Maxx* #4 featured a picture of the Vertigo character, Death, in the background of one page. *Sandman* fans might recall Kieth being disgruntled after leaving the title and may infer that the image is a jibe. Kieth says that this was not the case. "All I was trying to have Sarah [a character in *Maxx* #4] say there was that the concept of 'Death' had become a whole flip, hip, slicked, black-clothes-wearing, romantic, dramatic thing," he reveals. "Karen Berger, Neil Gaiman, and Mike Dringenberg liked that and I didn't. And that was the point of reference where my characters weren't into a romantic interpretation of Death. That was supposed to be the reference.



The Isz!

"I promise that when Pitt and the Dragon show up, it won't be the obligatory Marvel or DC crossover. I'll try to work a good story into it, too."—Kieth

"But now people think I hate Neil, and I don't," laughs Kieth.

All controversy aside, there are still many unanswered questions about the Maxx himself. When asked if he will ever take off his mask, Kieth says no, because its mystery compels readers to come back for the next issue.

When the Maxx first appeared in *Comico Primer* #5, he was a rabbit. Kieth is reluctant to say whether this newer version is one or not. "Don't you think kids would hate it if he was this big rabbit? This big bunny rabbit like Bugs Bunny with big buck teeth?" Kieth jokes. "He's...something," admits Kieth. "I think he's one thing in this world and another in the primitive world. My guess is he's probably a guy in this world, and because he dreams he's a rabbit in the other world, he's sure he's got to be ugly in this world, too.

"Essentially, in issue #5, we'll do a myth in the primitive world in which somebody angered one of the gods and got his head turned into a rabbit's, so he covered it with a mask," explains Kieth. "This guy, this bum, in the normal world found this mask and, when he put it on, got tied into the dreams of the outback of this other world."

Kieth is also excited about the crossover in *The Maxx* #'s 7 through 9, which teams the Maxx with Pitt and the Savage Dragon, two other really popular characters from the Imageverse. "I promise that when Pitt and the Dragon show up, it won't be the obligatory Marvel or DC crossover. I'll try to work a good story into it, too," Kieth assures. "I wanted to use the Dragon because he hasn't been done as much as, say, Todd McFarlane's characters. Dale Keown was really nice about letting me use Pitt; Bill will help ensure that it doesn't stray into complete mindlessness."

Also on tap are *Maxx* trade paperbacks, in which Kieth will compile "the ultimate version" of his stories. "The first six issues fit together into one story, but I want to go in and add pages and take pages out," he says. "I'll try to take out extraneous scenes and add things. I'd like to make it for [an older age group] and maybe have it hardbound. Issues #7 through #9 would also be collected. And #10, #11, and so on."

Image made headlines in the comics business earlier this year when they

announced that they would cease publication of many of their "second tier" titles, the ones not created by the original seven founders of the publishing house. One of the few books to survive that purge was *The Maxx*.

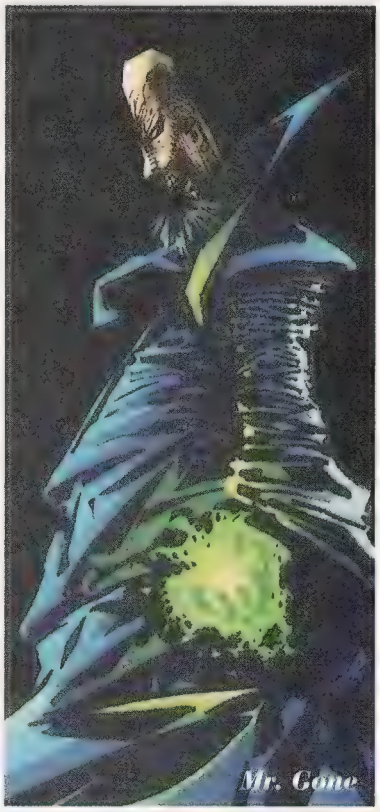
Messner-Loebs says that the trimming of Image's line was no shock to him. "I wasn't surprised by the announcement of the Image cancellations. Through Sam and some other folks, I knew that they had a lot of concerns..." he says. "I'm over 40—and of the core group, only Valentino is anywhere near that—and I think they went into this with all the best intentions. They thought they could bring a lot of new people into the field and help out a lot of people they thought were doing good work all at once.

"Then, when it didn't work out—for a variety of reasons—they took the criticisms of the media and distributors and retailers a little too seriously. Distributors are always going to say, 'You didn't tell us about this stuff; it isn't selling as well as the other stuff.' With some of the books there were personality conflicts as well. I think on the whole it would have been better if they had stayed with a few books and got them out on schedule. Of course, if they were those kinds of guys, they never would have started Image at all. As a result of their efforts, we have an entirely different industry.

"*The Maxx* survived the cut because—for an Image book—we were mostly on time; and because Sam knows all these people and is well-liked and was able to tell them what we were doing and avoid misunderstandings and resentments."

As for where *The Maxx* might be without Image, Kieth refers to a quote from comics creator Scott McCloud, author of the recent *Understanding Comics*. "Scott pointed out that *The Maxx* is a book that sells too well to be respected critically, but not well enough to be recognized in the market as a smash hit."

Kieth acknowledges that the Image label may make some in the comics community dismiss *The Maxx* as being unworthy of respect, but "the Image label also makes a lot of people think more of it than they should," he argues. "It probably sells better than it should because of the Image label. I really can't complain. I think it should be as radical as [Dark Horse's] *Tank Girl*; though it never will be because I don't have the same sensibilities as Jamie Hewlett. I think *The Maxx* is somewhere between that and a Wolverine story, where a big muscular guy is fighting people. It's like a left hand reaches out for the Image books and the right reaches out for all the underground and alternative books." ☆



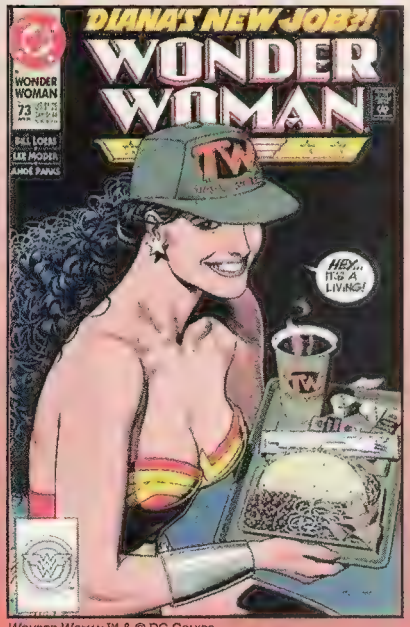
RESTORING THE WONDER

It's hard to imagine anything further removed from the eccentricity of *The Maxx* than the superheroics of DC's *Wonder Woman*—yet the adventures of the venerable Amazon is the other writing assignment currently being handled by William Messner-Loebs.

Messner-Loebs follows on the heels of George Pérez's acclaimed stint on the title. Messner-Loebs' more traditionally superheroic version took some heat because fans felt he was desecrating the peace-loving, nonviolent character Pérez had created in the post-Crisis Amazon. He concludes that the reaction was inevitable, because "I really don't write at all like George; I don't have many of his concerns, except that we both really like *Wonder Woman*."

Still, Messner-Loebs is quick to point out that this more aggressive version of Princess Diana did not spring entirely from him. "The editors wanted Wonder Woman to be more of a superhero," he says. "One of the reasons I was asked to write this is because I said I wanted to make Wonder Woman a more active, less passive character, and [I wanted] to give her a higher visibility.

"A lot of people hated the stories where she went out and got an entry-level fast-food job," he admits. "But I thought that George—by giving her such a solid support network and an important job—made her seem less self-assertive than she might have. It's hard to say this person shows an ability to stand on her own when all this stuff has just been given to her. By taking it all that way, we would demonstrate her ability to support herself."



WONDER WOMAN™ & © DC COMICS.

Traditionally, Wonder Woman is a character committed to peace and non-violence, Messner-Loebs points out. "She seeks nonviolent solutions. That's pretty hard to pull off on a comic page," he chuckles. "It's a hard sell. So, in the course of using supervillains and all, I've tried to show what a person who is genuinely committed to peace would do. One of the ways to do that—and avoid making the character a wimp—is to show that she is willing to put her own life on the line for other people or for a principle."

Perhaps Messner-Loebs sealed his own fate with the fans when he wrote the story that seemingly destroyed Themyscira, the Paradise Island of the post-Crisis Amazons. Asked if it will ever be seen again, Messner-Loebs laughs. "Themyscira's gone for good—and Superman's dead, too. It's not even gone for good as long I'm writing *Wonder Woman*," he reports. "It's part of an actual story—which is admittedly rare in comics these days. I didn't do it to sell more comics; there was not some big crowd clamoring for me to blow up Themyscira. Ninety percent of the readership wanted to kill me for that. Whatever happened to Themyscira was done so I could change the relationship between the Amazons and Wonder Woman. It turns out that it will fit into DC's *Zero Hour* plot for next year. And you won't like how it comes back, either."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

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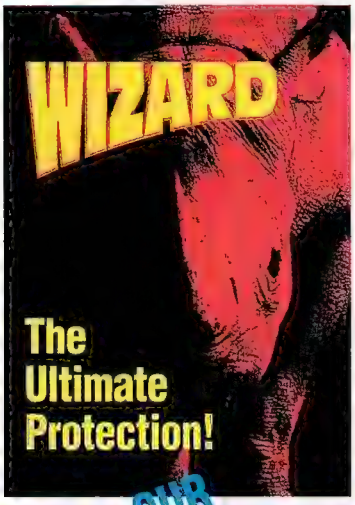

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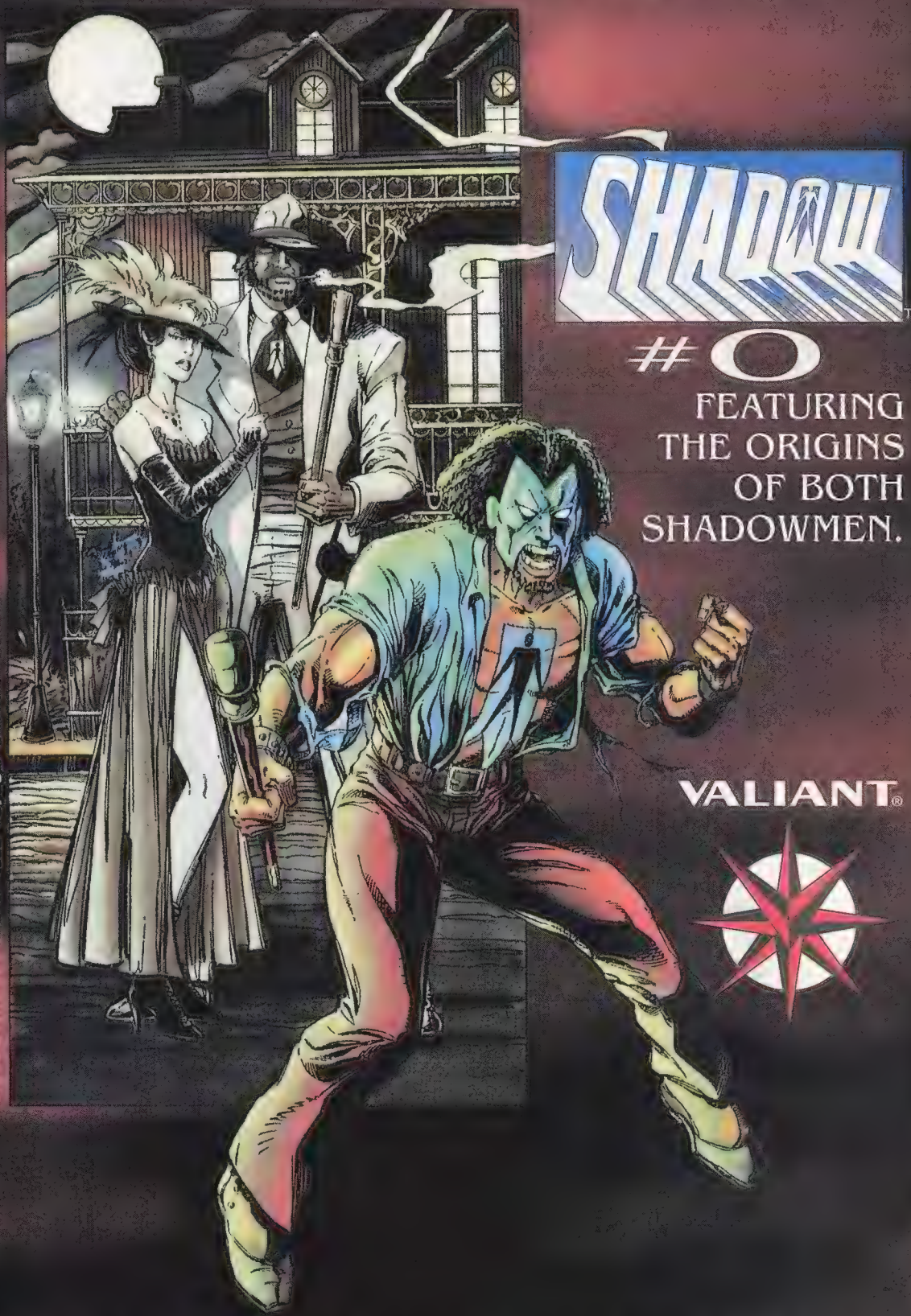

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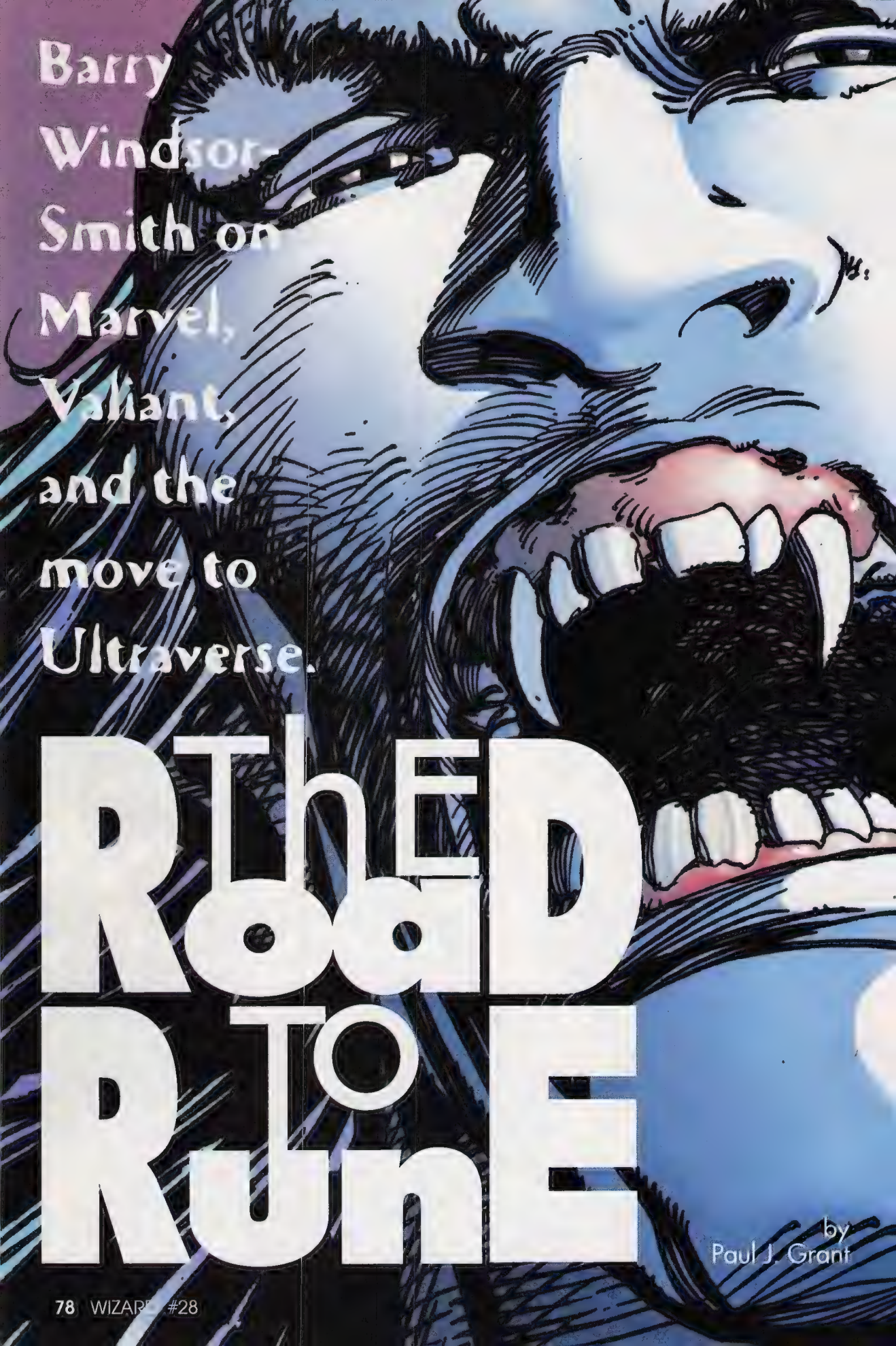

Barry Windsor-Smith on Marvel, Valiant, and the move to Ultraverse.

The Road to Rune

by Paul J. Grant

British-born writer-artist Barry Windsor-Smith is a hyphenate on many levels. For the last quarter of a century, his work has garnered a devoted fan-following, originally for his robust artistic style, but more recently due to his skills as a scripter as well. From *Conan* to "Weapon X," from *Archer & Armstrong* to the upcoming Ultraverse project *Rune*, Windsor-Smith has consistently grown as a storyteller.

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA.

Wizard: How did you link up with Malibu for *Rune*, your Ultraverse project? When you left Valiant, you were in a position where you could pretty much write your own ticket. I imagine you were courted by several publishers.

Windsor-Smith: Everybody and sundry. And I still am (being courted), as a matter of fact. Yeah, I talked with everybody. I was getting calls from Todd McFarlane, being the crazy guy he is [laughs], saying, "Ah, forget all that other lot, just come over here to Image, everything's going to be fine." And, in fact, I was planning to do something with Todd, but I could never quite figure out what to do. And I was talking with Jim Lee and all sorts of other people. I was talking with everybody. But in the case of Malibu, or the Ultraverse more specifically, they made me a very good offer. See, one of the situations here is that I had said many times, especially just as I was quitting Valiant, that I'd never work on a work-for-hire basis again. I absolutely loathe the fact that the stuff I create is not mine in any way whatsoever.

Yet here you are, doing work-for-hire for the Ultraverse.

For me, it's a temporary situation. This is a three-book mini-series sort of thing, and that's as far as my commitment goes with Malibu. That doesn't mean that I won't continue with Malibu, but it's all negotiable. I like (Ultraverse editor) Chris Ulm a lot, we get along very well, but it doesn't mean I'll be working with Malibu for the rest of my life. Right now, though, I'm actually having fun.

The character Rune was originally conceived by Ultraverse editor Chris Ulm, right?

As a sort of background character for a book that was to be called *Fuzion*, which was an entirely different storyline. When I was going over all of his notes, it seemed to me more sensible to play up the character of Rune, who is an ancient, inhuman vampire. So I sort of took the whole thing over, as is my wont, and Chris was very accommodating and amenable to all that. We're meshing together quite well. We thrashed out a whole new scenario, which I think is very exciting. It's some of the best stuff I've ever done, both in storytelling and in drawing.

I saw of poster of Rune. He's sort of the antithesis of the sexy vampire, isn't he?

Not exactly Christopher Lee, no. It's sort of hard to talk about what Rune is, because he is changing all the time. [Just like] people will do sketches to get an idea of what a character will look like, or somebody will write scenarios or dialogue to get the feel of how the character might talk, what's happening here is that I'm drawing this book in three-page increments as a back-up feature for other books, because that's how it's going to be published first off. I find that each finished piece of work that I'm doing is in a sense a sketch. It's like testing the waters to see just what this guy Rune is all about. To me, it's an investigative process.

So what have your investigations revealed to date?

Rune is utterly cold-blooded, utterly without any human feelings, emotions, or compunctions whatsoever. He is beyond and he is above the human race. I am now drawing the fifth three-page story, and I have Rune meet the electrical genius Nikola Tesla, as part of Rune's continuing need for power to sustain his life. He's not a madman like Doc Doom, who just wants to rule the world. That's not Rune's interest in the least. He simply needs power as much as we need cornflakes in the morning, a sensible lunch at noon, and a chicken cutlet in the evening. Rune requires such input. He's been looking for centuries for the power that will sustain him forever, because he's not necessarily immortal.

Is he a traditional bloodsucker, though?

Oh no, he sucks blood all right. Well, he doesn't exactly suck blood: he bites people's heads off, is what he does, almost literally devours people. But yes, lifeforce of blood is very much a part of his diet, as it were, but there's more to him than that. Blood is not enough; he can't live by bread alone, to mix a metaphor there. In this 33-page story, we see him both in the past and the present, switching back and forth. In the past we see how, in his constant search for energy, he tried to draw in power from a hydrogen bomb in its first test on the Eniwetok Atoll, and then finally we see how fusion power is what it's all leading to.

Rune's need for power gets more and more dire after the '50s... His attempt to investigate the hydrogen test to see if he could harness atomic power was a bit of a mistake for him, because he developed cancer. Since 1952, he has been dying. So [he needs] more and more power not only to sustain his life, but to actually save it. The way you saw Rune in the poster is when he's bald-headed and lumpy with strange bumps coming off his knees and elbows. He's already very deeply cancer-ridden: his bones, his blood, his spleen, it's all knotted and horrible.

Does this make him sympathetic?

Chris and I had originally settled on the point that there should be no sympathetic side to Rune's character. I find that as I flesh him out I can make him recklessly dangerous and overwhelmingly evil, at least by human standards, but by the same token he can have moments when you actually quite like the guy, because you can see why he does what he does. He's not a Nazi or some sort of person with an evil purpose. His only purpose is to survive. And if he does things that horrify humankind, it's simply because we're human and he is alien.

He sucks blood all right. Well, he doesn't exactly suck blood: he bites people's heads off...

Let's move back to the Valiant era, if a year and a half can be called an era. How did you get inveigled into working for Valiant?

I think "inveigled" is the word. You know how things were like with Jim Shooter at that time. He was starting this new company and he had Bob Layton on his side, and Bob was a friend of mine. And because of Jim's less-than-endearing past with most all of the pro-

RUNE CREATED BY CHRIS ULM AND BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH. ™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

Something tells me Rune is looking for more than a kiss goodnight!

fessionals in the field, he simply couldn't get any top names to come in with him. I was just finishing up "Weapon X," and Bob just pretty much "inveigled" me into doing it. There were plenty of times in the first year of my doing the *Solar* story with Shooter that Bob took me aside and said, "I apologize deeply for getting you into this, Barry." It was kind of a rocky road with Jim Shooter.

Then, to cut to the quick of it, Shooter was fired and again I found myself pulled into something that I could really have done without. So I took over writing *Archer & Armstrong* and a whole lot of other stuff, and produced some pretty good books.

Because of Jim Shooter's less-than-endearing past with most of the professionals in the field, he simply

Archer & Armstrong was far and away my favorite of all the Valiant titles. This isn't sucking up, you understand—it was the one book that stood out from the pack in terms of tone. The characterizations were absolutely hilarious.

Thanks, man, I appreciate that. I used to enjoy cracking myself up when I was writing that stuff. My method of working has always been just to let the characters tell the story. Those two guys that I came up with were just so ridiculous as a couple that they just couldn't help but be silly and funny. They would actually come up with things that would make me laugh. I wouldn't say to myself, "Yes, I'm being funny here." I'd realize that it was Armstrong that was being funny. He had his own life, as did Archer.

Were Archer and Armstrong actually based on anyone you know?

Not physically, but these two opposing characters are very much my two opposing sides. I'm just like Armstrong, a wine-slurping, indifferent absurdist. But I'm also this all-too-naïve, extremely serious, thoughtful youth like Archer. So I just poured them out of myself, and put them into two separate people, so they could come into conflict in the nicest possible way.

At one point, when Shooter left, were you offered the presidency of Valiant?

Yep. That was it on the face of matters. When Shooter left, the idea was to recreate the company with Steve Massarsky, Jon Hartz, Bob Layton, and myself as the controlling foursome. Yes, the word "presidency" was [batted around]. I spent a year trying to negotiate my contract with Massarsky. All that while, I was producing *Archer & Armstrong* and *Eternal Warrior*, teaching the kids up there how to color, how to letter, how to ink. I put an enormous amount of work and investment into that company, and yet it took about a year for me to finally throw up my hands and say, "This guy doesn't want to negotiate." It was a take-it-or-leave-it proposition from Massarsky. I felt in the end that my integrity was [put in] jeopardy by associating with these people. They were using my good name to buffer the firing of Jim and to give credibility to the company.

If you're going to be president, you should actually have some power, I imagine.

Precisely. When I started to ask question about how the company was run, like "What is the financing situation around here?", I was just given a runaround. Nothing made sense. All the numbers didn't work. I still have no idea how the company is run, because they wouldn't tell me, my accountant, or my lawyer. I think I was treated very badly.

Did you come out of this with more sympathy for Shooter?

Yes. I always did have sympathy for Shooter, and I gained some perspective myself. I always regretted that I went for the whole thing hook, line, and sinker. When Shooter was fired, Massarsky and Layton ... were all so dead set against him, saying that he was ruining the company, and I just kind of went along with it. I never even gave Jim the courtesy of a phone call. I just perceived him as the enemy, suddenly. There had been two camps created overnight, and I was in this sort of chummy camp with Massarsky and Layton, and there was this guy left out in the middle of a field somewhere with no bullets in his gun. I should have called Jim, to get the other side of the coin, but I just fell for the whole damn thing. I gotta admit it, I was pretty naïve to fall for it that way. Not to hold a halo over Shooter's head—I'd been told on more than one occasion

whilst I was doing the *Solar* story that Shooter wanted to fire me because I wasn't following his story. I never follow anybody's story; I tell my own stories. But this is what I was told, and I said, "Oh, that jerk! He pretends to be my friend and he wants to get me fired." I don't know what's true and what isn't true, to be honest with you. I listen to this side, I listen to that.

Have you talked to Shooter since then?

No, I haven't. During negotiations with Massarsky it was suggested to me that I could possibly get some insight into questions that had been left unanswered by Massarsky if I spoke with Shooter, and there was a possibility that that could have happened. But I felt wholly uncomfortable calling Jim on my own behalf when I had ignored him at the time that he was fired. It seemed improper. And so I didn't talk to him then, and I haven't spoken to him since. I don't know if Jim bears a grudge against me. I wouldn't be surprised if he does. I bear him no ill will. I don't want to work with him again. I wish him good luck and all that sort of stuff. All I know in the end is that I have to be the one who counts most for me, so as I said, I'd had enough of what I considered to be a very deleterious (and growing even more so) situation for me, and just walked. Walked as fast as I could.

When you first came to the United States, was it for professional or personal reasons?

Entirely professional, not that the immigration authorities knew that. I was over here on a two-week visitor's visa, which lasted about six months. I just had this overwhelming need to draw comic books, so I came here in the summer of '68, and inveigled my way into Marvel Comics—the old Marvel Comics, Stan Lee's Marvel Comics. He was still writing *Fantastic Four* and other stuff. It was about six months before Jack Kirby left for DC.

From where does one get an overwhelming need to draw comic books?

I grew up reading American comics, those which I could get. They were sent over to England as ballast in commercial shipping. They weren't sent as articles to be loved and adored by children, they were simply used as ballast. Because I lived in London, which was a major port, those boxes or crates of comic books and magazines were distributed to the news agents, and I started to see artists that really did stuff for me, like Gil Kane, Carmine Infantino, and then later Jack Kirby. Jack Kirby was the single most important influence; [he] gave me an overwhelming desire to draw comic books. It just inspired the romantic in me.

Was there any comic book scene in England at the time?

None to speak of. There was actually an attempt at doing a sort of UK version of Marvel Comics. They were being republished by Fleetway in England in black-and-white form; they were really quite atrocious things called *Fantastic*, *Terrific*, *Moronic*. So I did some work for Fleetway whilst I was still in art school, pinups and stuff like that. I was all very naïve; I was only a kid, a teenager.

When you came to the United States, had you already lined up work, or were you flying blind?

No. I had sent stuff over, drawings, very Kirbyesque kinds of stuff, about six months beforehand, and got a letter back from Marvel that said, "Good on you, but you're there and we're here, tough luck." So I just saw that I had better get there if I wanted to do anything. I sold all my possessions and got a plane ticket and that was that.

What a difference 25 years makes. Now, what with Federal Express and fax machines, it's quite easy to live in the Philippines or England or Zimbabwe and still work out of New York.

Yep. It was all very steam-driven in those days. Very horse-drawn.

couldn't get any top names to come in with him.

So you showed up in New York City with nothing but hopes, dreams, and aspirations, and you popped over to Marvel and they gave you an assignment right away, right?

More or less, although it wasn't right away. As I said, I had a visitor's visa, so I was absolutely desperate. I mean I was so bold as a youth that I would have just stood there holding my breath 'til I turned purple if they wouldn't give me any work. They sort of toyed with the idea of giving me something; they needed that look, that Jack Kirby look. I think it's pretty much the same story nowadays, where a young talent will go into Marvel or DC or wherever and he really can't draw very well, but he has a knack for making his work look like his hero, which at this point is probably Jim Lee or somebody like that. That young

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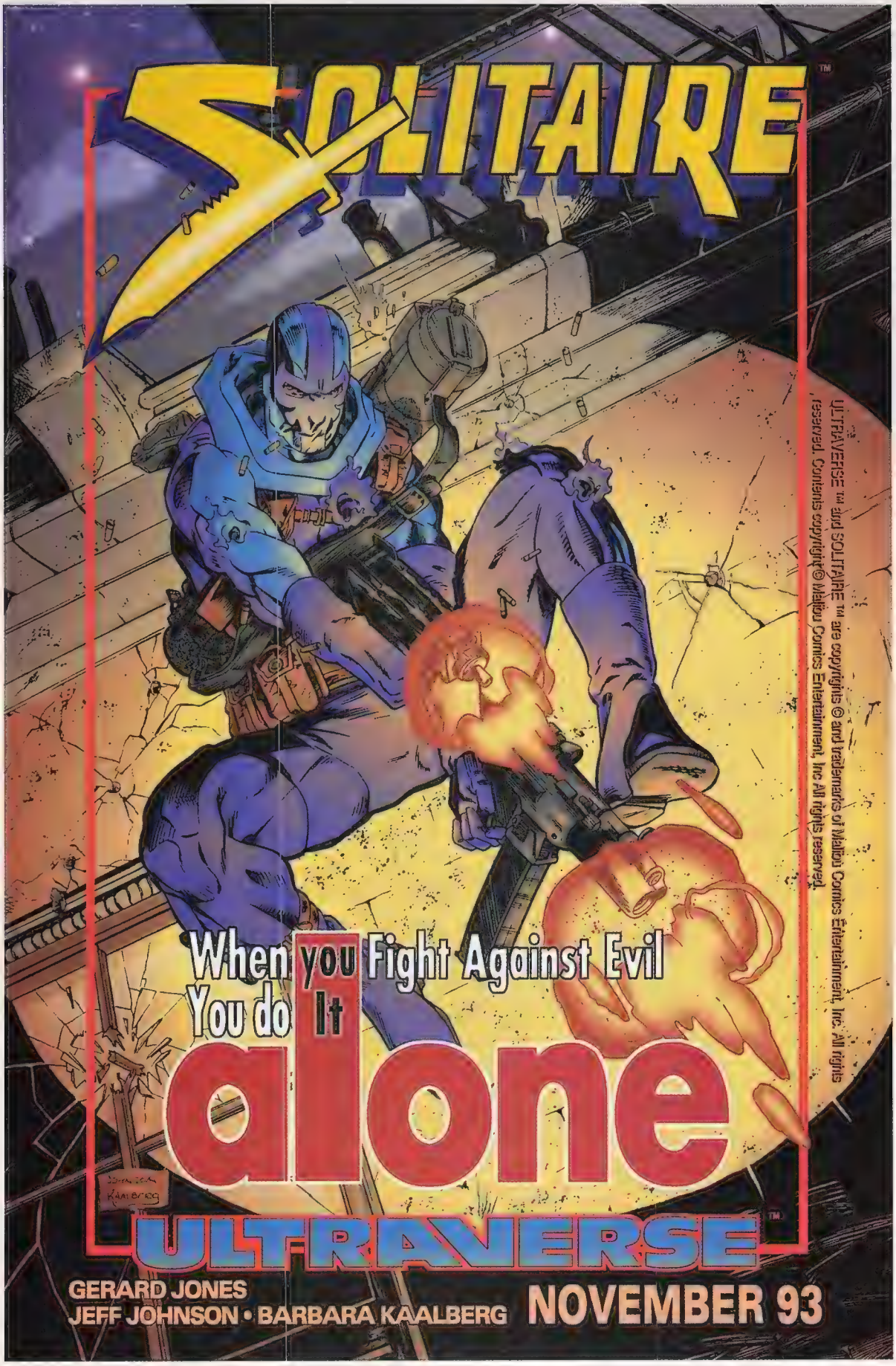
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artist will get work, even though he's really not that good. One must always give a chance to younger artists and writers if they show any kind of innate understanding of what the field's about. In my case, I had an innate understanding of storytelling, and the very fact that I emulated Jack Kirby made it all the more interesting to Stan and Roy Thomas.

What was your first published American work?

X-Men #53. Jim Steranko had taken over from Werner Roth, and Steranko could never hit his deadlines. Werner Roth, while very competent as a cartoonist, wasn't exactly turning everybody on. I think they figured there wasn't much to lose with the *X-Men*, because it was going to get canceled anyway, and they gave me a one-shot to write and draw. It was scripted by Arnold Drake, but it was my story. I got it done pretty fast, a couple of pages a day, sitting in some grungy hotel room on 26th Street, with all this alien life going on around me, policemen with guns and riots. I didn't really realize that that was a necessity. I was too [new] to the business, but I had this need to make good. I didn't want to go back to England as an 18-year-old with no prospects. It was enormously important to me. So I stuck with it and made it stick.

What came next?

I did a few other odds and sods, and then I started hanging around the office a bit, so I got to know people and they got to know me, which was difficult for them because they couldn't understand a goddamn word I was saying because I had such a thick Cockney accent at the time.

"Two people separated by a common language."

Yes, indeed. Oscar Wilde, I think, said that, and he was so right. The immigration authorities knew I was up to something. They kept sending me these forms asking "Are you working?" and I'd say "No!" and they'd say "How are you supporting yourself?" so I'd lie and say "Mum sent me a few quid." That worked for a while, but they kinda twigged what I was up to, so they threatened me with deportation. If I got deported I couldn't return within a ten-year period, so that was a scary thing. There was talk about me not so much given plane tickets as being sent out on some Air Force jet and given a parachute as they passed over the British Isles.

By that time, I think I had done three issues of *Daredevil*, which was an ongoing series and which I was enjoying immensely. Again, very badly drawn, but I was making up a good story and I think that's what made them want to keep me.

At what point were you offered *Conan*?

That was towards the end of '69. I was back in England, and Marvel's attorney—they had only one in those days—was helping me get my green card. I was doing some short stories for their so-called horror magazines: *Tower of the Idiotic*, *Chamber of Boredom*.

Behind the scenes, back in the good old U.S. of A., Roy Thomas was trying to get the rights to *Conan*. I've said this a thousand times, and nobody's ever refuted it, least of all Roy, so I guess the story is true: I got the Conan gig, as it were, because I was very cheap. I was getting about 20 bucks a page. I understand that Roy wanted John Buscema to draw it all along, but Stan—who had no concept at all of sword-and-sorcery—didn't like the idea of Conan, a licensed property, mucking with the Marvel Universe, and just had no understanding of what was going on so there was a lot of resistance on his part. The way Roy wrangled this thing through was, "If the book fails, at least we won't lose that much money." Whereas they would have lost money if they had to pay John Buscema, as he was the highest-paid artist there at the time. So I got the job because I was cheap.

And it made you, for a time, a "hot" artist.

Blimey, so it did. One of the very first of the superstar guys.

How long did you work on Conan?

Two years. Twenty-four issues.

There was a long period after that and before "Weapon X" where you had very little output in comics.

I had gotten disgusted with the comics field, so I created The Gorblimey Press. From 1973 to 1985—so I was working all the time, just not in comic books. I was making pictures and portfolios and stuff like that. It was good, because I was in control. One of the things I'd hated about my early days in comics was that I had no real control over anything. The better I got at what I did, the more I needed to be treated with respect by my associates and contemporaries.

But also the more control other people were exerting over your work. When you were young and cheap, could you get away with a lot more?

Yeah. I always felt that I've got a very good purview of what to do when one is making a comic book. The better I got at what I was doing, the less I needed interference. I never have liked being interfered with.

X-Men ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

Windsor-Smith's first published American work was *X-Men* #53.

Conan was a Code comic book. Sometimes I found their objections to things I would do absolutely laughable, other times I would resent it deeply. I would toss and turn in my sleep for months, imagining that some twerp at the Comics Code Authority would review my work and demand that it be changed, either because of some violence or a woman's leg or a bit of cleavage. I always felt that my taste was far superior to anyone's at the Comics Code. I'm very haughty and pushy about having the integrity of my work questioned.

I would also get it from the editors, people for whom I really [didn't have] a great deal of respect, with the exception of Roy Thomas, at that time. Even Roy would change things on my work without consulting me and it pissed me off and made me realize that I wasn't important enough to the people that I was working for.

And I was strictly against most of Marvel's policies, like keeping the artwork, retaining the entire copyright. I had a few fights with Stan Lee about the political processes, and eventually I thought, "Well, screw this. I'm better than this, I don't have to argue with these people." So I quit. I still did a few things: the *Machine*

Conan the Barbarian ™ & © Magazine Management Co., Inc, Marvel Comics Group.

Logan, Wolverine, and Weapon X™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

One of the many cheerful scenes from the Marvel's "Weapon X" saga.

Men series, a few really good (in my opinion) *X-Men* fill-ins. But mostly I was giving myself over to my own pursuits. In that ten-, twelve-year period at Gorblimey Press I became an art student again. I reevaluated what I was doing and found it wanting. My drawing was far too stylish; it wasn't academic enough, it didn't have enough knowledge. So I spent 12 years back at school, as it were, and I think it showed in the comics work that I did do in the late '70s and early '80s.

So how were you lured back into comics on a regular basis? Particularly, what led up to your doing "Weapon X" in *Marvel Comics Presents*.

I still needed to give into this need of mine to tell stories. I think that "Weapon X" only came about because the editor, Terry Kavanagh, called me up—actually, he was calling up everyone he could think of, artists and writers who obviously didn't want to do a monthly book. He told me about this new book called *Marvel Comics Presents*, which frankly was described to me as a wholly different thing from what it turned out to be.

He was throwing out names like Steve Ditko, Gene Colan, all sorts of luminaries from the past, and I thought, "Wow, this is really going to be a showcase of good storytelling and good art." Of course, it didn't turn out to be like that at all, it turned out to be Amateur Night at Marvel Comics. I was just fiddling around, trying to think of some character in the Marvel Universe who didn't wholly offend me. I thought of Logan as a sort of Everyman type. He was closer to some kind of hero/anti-hero-type person for me (than most other Marvel characters), and I thought perhaps I could do something with this guy with spikes coming out of his hands.

You employed a non-linear approach to the script—

A non-Marvel approach.

—that was totally foreign not only to the rest of the magazine but also to everything else being done by Marvel at the time.

Yeah, giggle giggle. How devilish of me, hmmm?

"Weapon X" was billed as the series that would explain the origin of Wolverine, but it ended up leaving things more unsettled than before.

You have to understand that I didn't write the promos. Whenever anyone asked me what it was about, I said, "Well, it's the origin of Logan." I originally intended to do about five issues of obscure storytelling with very flashy graphics. It was just something I fancied doing, not getting into characterization, not getting into a long storyline. I just wanted to do something that would be more graphics-oriented, just for the heck of it.

How the story of "Weapon X" evolved was, ironically enough, that Chris Claremont was originally upset that I was doing this thing and told me that he had had, all along, an origin for Wolverine. I said, "Why didn't you do it?", and I guess he was too busy doing other things. And so, even though I didn't change my story in any way to accommodate Chris, I certainly felt that Chris should be paid some respect, so I didn't want to go treading all over some idea that he had. By that token, I rather left the storyline—or at least the basis of what had created that storyline—untouched. I left clues, but I didn't explain anything. And I quite deliberately chose to write it in a fashion that was distinctly non-Marvel. I simply refused to write Marvel-style, because [I found] it pitiable, to be honest with you.

What was the reaction when the first pages came in?

Oh, everybody loved it! I think that Terry Kavanagh was hip enough to appreciate that it wasn't written in the standard Marvel way, but he was quite happy with it.

It didn't have the typical endless recapitulation and footnotes.

Oh, all that bloody bull. I've always hated that, and I think it will be the death of Marvel eventually because it's just insulting to the reader. Maybe these readers like to be insulted. Who knows? ☆

Paul J. Grant is a freelance writer based in West Bloomfield, Mich.

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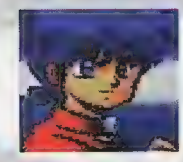
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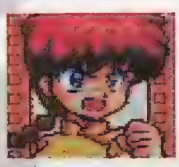
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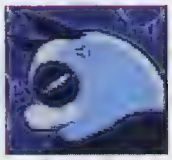
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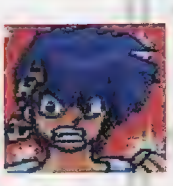
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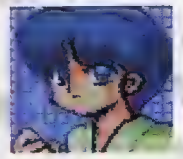
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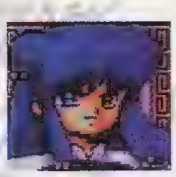
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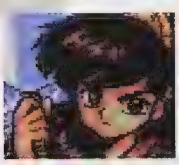
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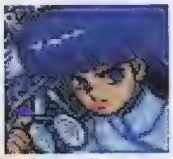
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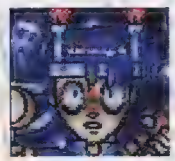
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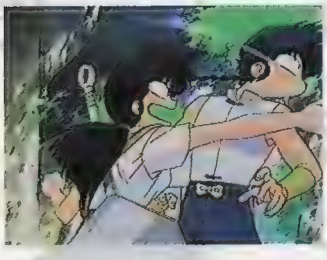

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From left to right: Doctor Solar, Turok, and Magnus, alongside their modern-day counterparts (insets).

WESTERN HEROES

A history of Western Publishing and their heroes, who have made a Valiant comeback.

by William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert

There are probably very few comic fans around today who don't know the characters Magnus, Solar, and Turok as published by Valiant. What you may not know is that each of these guys, and many more characters used by Valiant, first appeared in the Silver Age of comics, from 1956 to 1968, in titles published by a company known to its readers as Gold Key. The story of this company and the titles it published is as fascinating as the characters themselves.

The Company

Gold Key was an imprint—much like Epic is for Marvel, or Vertigo is for DC—of Western Publishing, which may be the most interesting unsung company in the history of comics publishing. Never in the spotlight but always a major player in the business, Western has been involved in the comics industry for over 50 years. In 1935, the company that was then known as Western Printing and Lithography began publishing *Mickey Mouse Magazine*. Although this promotional publication was formatted like a magazine, it contained some newspaper strip reprints.

But the story of Western's connection to the comics industry really begins with another famous publisher from the past, Dell Publishing. Dell, founded by George T. Delacorte, was an innovator in the fledgling comics industry. As early as 1936, Dell was publishing comics in the format with which we're familiar today. Their first efforts consisted exclusively of newspaper comic-strip reprints. But in 1938, Dell hired Western Printing & Lithography to print and package all-new comics for the Dell line. After experiencing moderate success with original material published first in comics format, Dell pioneered another area that has become familiar territory in comics circles: the licensing of outside properties. The publisher struck a deal with Walt Disney Studios, and in 1940 the first issue of *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* hit newsstands. By the mid-'40s, *Comics and Stories* was selling in excess of one million copies per issue. Dell quickly followed up this success by printing other Disney titles. Western provided the material and printed all of these comics for Dell.

Licensing was enormously profitable for Dell, and they soon exploited the concept to its fullest by starting an anthology of licensed projects in 1941. Dell's *Four Color Comics*, in addition to showcasing the proven Walt Disney characters, featured characters from radio, television, movies, and other animation studios, notably Walter Lantz (Woody Woodpecker), King Features (Popeye), and Warner Brothers (Bugs Bunny). Along with *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories*, *Four Color* became a flagship of the Dell line, lasting for over 1,300 weekly issues.

But after riding high for over twenty years on the success of their licensed properties, Dell became a bit overconfident, and in 1961 they were the first comics publisher to raise the price of their regular titles. While Dell comics then carried a 15 cent tag, most other publishers managed to hold off price increases for another few months. When they did raise their cover price, they kept it down to 12 cents, and Dell's circulation plummeted overnight.

As a result of this fiasco, Dell decided to forego the costly licenses and rely exclusively on in-house productions. At this point, Western balked, and in 1961 they decided that they could handle things better than their contractor could. They terminated their relationship with Dell and began publishing comics on their own. Western took over Dell's most

expensive—and lucrative—licenses, including the valuable Disney license, as well as high-profile TV licenses such as *The Lone Ranger*.

The early 1960s was an explosive time for the comics industry. Marvel Comics sent the industry reeling with the introduction of their new breed of superheroes, such as the Fantastic Four and Spider-Man. Simultaneously, DC's hero revival was moving into full swing. Sensing the renewed interest in superheroics, Western, now using their new Gold Key imprint, decided to toss their hat into the superhero arena by introducing Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom, in his own book in October, 1962. Gold Key was able to find its niche during the '60s, using a mix of its own characters, such as Magnus, Turok, and Doc Solar, alongside their high-profile licenses, such as *Star Trek*, Disney, and Tarzan.

Like most other publishers, Western found the market in a state of change during the early '70s. The formulae which had worked during the 1960s were no longer as successful for any publisher. Once again playing the role of a pioneer, Western found itself experimenting with alternate forms of distribution by the middle of the decade. Under its new Whitman imprint, Western packaged and distributed their comics to department stores as well as continuing their regular newsstand distribution using the Gold Key logo. Whitman's distribution method proved viable enough that Western even distributed some DC Comics in department stores using the Whitman logo. By 1981, Western was using the Whitman distribution exclusively, but comics provided only a small percentage of its sales. In 1984, the company abandoned its dwindling comic branch.

The Deal

In 1991, just seven years after Western gave up on comics, Valiant would initiate a new age of heroes featuring some of the same characters which Western had used to help usher in the Silver Age 30 years previously. After publishing comics based on Nintendo characters and narrowly failing to acquire Marvel Comics in 1989, Voyager Communications partners Jim Shooter and Steven J. Massarsky purchased the license to Gold Key's defunct comics characters. The arrangement seemed beneficial to both parties, because Western wasn't using the characters, and Voyager was looking for some established characters to help jump-start a new superhero universe.

Under the terms of the agreement, Valiant may utilize any of Western's characters, and must pay royalties on those characters it uses. Furthermore, Valiant has "right of first refusal" on characters that Western owns. For example, if some other publisher wanted to license Western's occult character, Doctor Spektor, Western and the other publisher could only enter into a licensing agreement if Valiant indicated that it had no plans for Doctor Spektor.

Furthermore, the agreement is not restricted to comics publishing. Valiant can use the characters in any endeavor or medium—including movies, toys, shirts, video games, among others. Even better, for Valiant, is the fact that there is no time limit on this licensing agreement; the company can continue using Gold Key's characters indefinitely. Virtually the only restrictive part of the agreement is Western's insistence upon the right of approval on all material involving their characters. In other words, Valiant must submit all their work utilizing Western characters to Western for review. As one of the country's leading publishers and distributors of children's books, Western's only objections so far has been related to "mature" language employed by their characters. Avoiding this has not been a problem for Valiant thus far.

The Characters

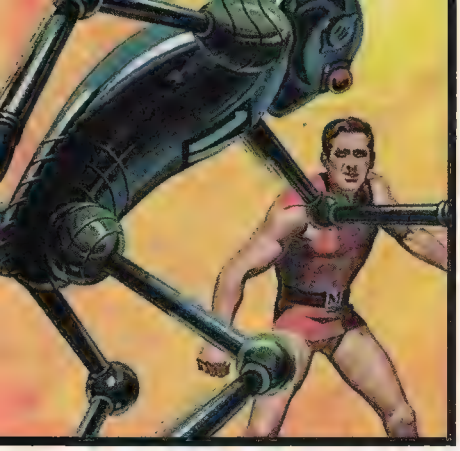
Magnus, Doctor Solar, and Turok were some of the big stars for Western Publishing in the '60s, just as they are for Valiant today. However, along with the "big three," Valiant has revamped many other characters and concepts from Western's Gold Key line. This ready-made history is part of the reason the Valiant line was so successful from the get-go. In some cases, they had more than 25 years of past chronicles from which to draw.

Even though Doctor Solar is usually touted as the first Gold Key hero—in fact, he *is* the first character Western created after splitting from Dell—Turok is actually older than Solar. Turok was created in 1954, seven years before the split, and is one of the properties Western took when it started the Gold Key imprint. Turok had two tryout appearances in Dell's *Four Color* anthology before getting his own title, which started at #3. By that numbering scheme, *Four Color* #596 counts as *Turok* #1 and *Four Color* #656 as *Turok* #2. It was common practice for Dell to continue numbering from the *Four Color* issues if the property received its own title after a successful tryout.

In the Dell/Gold Key series, Turok and his traveling companion Andar were Native Americans who blundered into the Lost Valley in an area of New Mexico near the Carlsbad caverns. The valley was formed when some of the region's vast limestone caverns collapsed, forming a huge valley. The valley's stable climate allowed prehistoric creatures to exist side-by-side with many other species, including humans. During the course of the series, most of the stories depicted Turok and Andar's exploits as they tried to find their way out of the Lost Valley.

Over the course of *Turok*'s 131 issues—the series ended in 1982—Turok developed a small cast of supporting characters. Lanok, a primitive tribesman whom Turok and Andar trained to use a

Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom; Turok, Son of Stone; and Magnus, Robot Fighter 4000 A.D. ™ & © Western Publishing.



Magnus and 1A at a square dance? Actually, they're battling for the fate of a world!

bow, first appeared in *Four Color* #656, and would occasionally meet up with the dinosaur-fighting duo during their adventures. In *Turok* #84, Turok and Andar encountered a lost tribe of Aztecs who had also wandered into the valley and were unable to find their way out. Hutec, one of the tribe's members, spent several issues with Turok and Andar in their search for a way out of the Lost Valley. Andar even acquired a pet, a wolf-cub he named Ski-Yu, in *Turok* #6, but apparently the cuteness-factor didn't sit well with the hard-core adventure fans who followed Turok. Ski-Yu only lasted three issues.

Fighting dinosaurs and hostile primitives for 130 regular issues and one giant issue made for an exciting life for Turok. As crafty then as he is today, Turok maintained an edge by keeping his poison-tipped arrows a closely-guarded secret. Though he taught many tribes how to craft spears, bows, and arrows, he made it a point to reserve the poison arrows for himself and Andar. The hunter used this little insurance policy in virtually every issue.

Perhaps his strangest pre-Valiant adventure took place in *Turok* #58. An alien spacecraft landed in the Lost Valley and, after helping them fight off a group of dinosaurs, the aliens agreed to take Turok and Andar out of the valley. Unfortunately, both the aliens and their spacecraft were destroyed by dinosaurs, and once again Turok and Andar's hopes of escape were dashed.

The world of Magnus, as developed by Western, contrasts starkly with Turok's Lost Valley. Magnus' home, North Am in the year 4000 AD, is a giant city which encompasses the entire North American continent. *Magnus* started in 1963 and ended with issue #46 in 1977. Of those 46 issues, #29 through #46 were previous issues reprinted in random order. Magnus gained a small reprieve in 1981 as a backup in *Doctor Solar*.

Probably influenced by Marvel's successes, Western developed a loose continuity in the series. Along with a regularly appearing supporting cast, Magnus developed a rogue's gallery. He squared off against his more persistent foes a handful of times in his brief 28-issue original run, and met a few friends along the way as well.

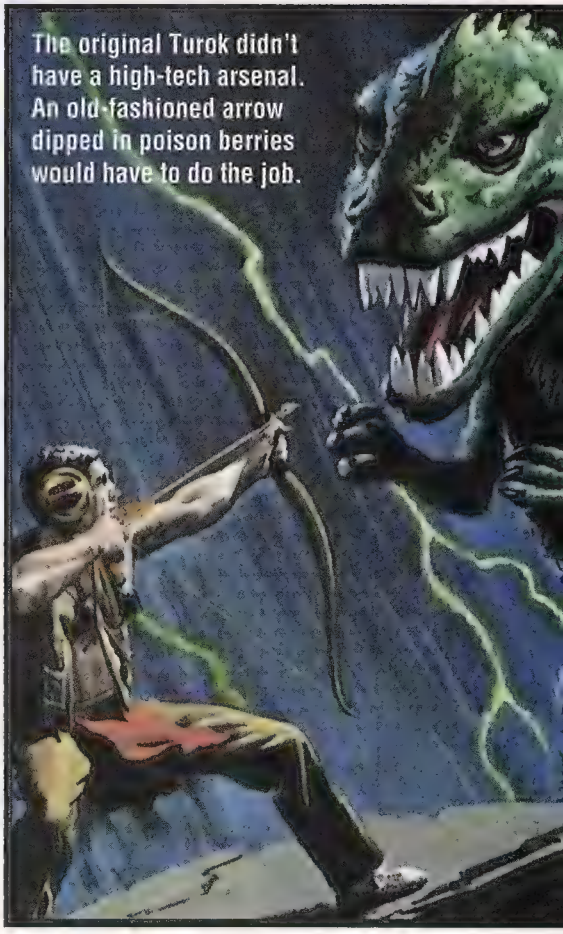
Magnus hit the ground running in his first issue, which chronicled his origin, and introduced the most important members of his supporting cast. Magnus was raised and trained by the intelligent robot 1A. 1A foresaw a day when robots might rebel against man, and trained Magnus to fight them. It also implanted a robot receptor in his brain, which allowed him to hear robot communications. Magnus' love interest was Leeja Clane, the beautiful daughter of an important North Am Senator. Poor Leeja would be kidnapped or otherwise harassed in virtually every issue, thanks to her association with Magnus. During his inaugural adventure, Magnus rescued 1000 people who were being used as a "human computer" by a rogue robot.

In *Magnus* #2, Leeja's father Senator Clane made his first appearance, and Magnus met Mekman, the first of four major villains who would beleaguer Magnus during his short publishing life. Mekman was an insane human who admired robots so much that he wanted to become one. He coated his skin with a superflexible sheet of impenetrable steel in an effort to emulate robots. Furthermore, he was a master at creating robots that could emulate living beings. In *Magnus* #2 he created a Magnus robot, along with robot duplicates of North Am's ruling council. Even though Magnus defeated his plans that time, Mekman returned in *Magnus* #11, accompanied by robots which looked like animals.

Even worse than Mekman was Xyrkol, another mad-scientist type who was interested in forbidden and dangerous technologies. Although his plans to create powerful robots which would help him become ruler of the Earth were foiled by Magnus in both the second and fifth issues, Xyrkol persisted. In *Magnus* #7, his quest for exotic hardware brought him into contact with Malev-6, the robot planet.

Malev-6 was originally a robot repair ship. It crash-landed on the sixth planet from the star named Malev. Hard radiation from Malev altered its brain, granting it free-will. The brain soon expanded itself until it filled the entire planet, but even then it thirsted for new territory. To help Magnus conquer Malev-6, Leeja enlisted the aid of the 1000 people whom Magnus had rescued in his first issue. It seems that, because of their prior ordeal, they had learned to coordinate their mind-force. Magnus was able to use that force to disable Malev-6—or so he thought.

Malev-6 returned in *Magnus* #21 and enlisted the aid of Xyrkol and one Doctor Lazlo Noel. Doctor Noel was different from the usual *Magnus* villain in that his goals and beliefs were very similar to those of Magnus. He felt that humans were too dependent on robots and that mankind should be wary of a robot rebellion. In *Magnus* #13, Noel almost succeeded in his goal of kidnapping several people and starting a robot-free colony of his own. Malev-6 used Xyrkol and Noel to create a robot powered by ectotheric energy. As Malev described it, ectotheric



The original Turok didn't have a high-tech arsenal. An old-fashioned arrow dipped in poison berries would have to do the job.

energy was "the psychic force from subspace that Earthmen have unwittingly used for eons. The force that creates ghosts, poltergeists, and sorcery!" When Magnus learned who was behind the ectorob, he vowed to seek out Malev and destroy it once and for all.

Before Magnus had the chance to do so, the planet struck again in *Magnus* #24. This time it was kidnapping humans and using them as a source of ectotheric energy. Magnus teamed up with Doctor Noel, who had become quite powerful due to his last encounter with Malev-6. The robot-hating Noel was repulsed at having been controlled by Malev, so he gladly set aside his past differences with Magnus to seek revenge on the robot planet. During their adventure, Magnus also learned the secrets of controlling ectotheric energy. Once again, it appeared that Malev had been irrevocably destroyed.

In addition to the ever-present Leeja and Senator Clane, Magnus was occasionally aided by Timbuc, a commander in North Am's defense; the Outsiders, a group of teenagers who shared Magnus' trepidation about robots; and Spikey the Goph, who lived in North Am's hazardous lower levels.

Doctor Solar split the difference between Magnus' adventures in North Am of 4000 AD and Turok's escapades in the Lost Valley a few hundred years ago. *Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom* took place in this world and in this time. Solar's origin is very similar to that of Marvel's Incredible Hulk; in fact, *Doctor Solar* #1 appeared on the stands a mere five months after *Hulk* #1. Doctor Solar was bombarded by atomic radiation while trying to save a fellow scientist from being exposed. As in *Hulk* #1, Doctor Solar's experiments were tampered with by a covert agent, and what should have been a fatal dose of radiation turned Solar into something more than human. (It even turned Solar's skin green, just like the Hulk's!)

But that's where the similarities end. While the Hulk's abilities are physical, Solar's are energy-based. After the accident, he found that he could convert his body from matter into energy and back, and project energy from his body in a seemingly endless number of ways. Solar's regular cast consisted only of his girlfriend Gail Sanders and his friend and colleague Dr. Clarkson, both of whom were introduced during Solar's origin story in *Doctor Solar* #1. Even though he was a superhero in every sense of the word, Solar didn't have any real supervillains to fight. Most of his adventures involved him combating natural disasters or foiling the plans of his only worthy nemesis, Nuro.

Nuro, also introduced in *Doctor Solar* #1, was a mysterious man. He possessed both great wealth and great scientific knowledge, and his primary goal in life was to eliminate Doctor Solar, whom he had inadvertently helped create when he ordered his agent to sabotage the atomic experiment on which Solar was working. Nuro stayed behind the scenes for the early part of the *Doctor Solar* series, appearing only briefly, and even then within shadows.

Like Nuro, Doctor Solar stayed under cover at first, trying to keep his exploits out of the public eye. That finally proved to be too much of a burden, and in *Doctor Solar* #5 Solar designed a costume for himself and went public, at the same time revealing his identity to his girlfriend, Gail Sanders. In *Doctor Solar* #17, Nuro stepped up his activities as well. He designed a sophisticated android, Orun, which he was to use in many future battles against Solar. Eventually, in issue #21, Nuro transferred his consciousness into the android. The android became known as King Cybernoid and continued to be a character until the series ended with its 31st issue in 1982.

The most astonishing part of Valiant's use of these characters is that they have formed a coherent universe out of three characters who exist in widely disparate times.

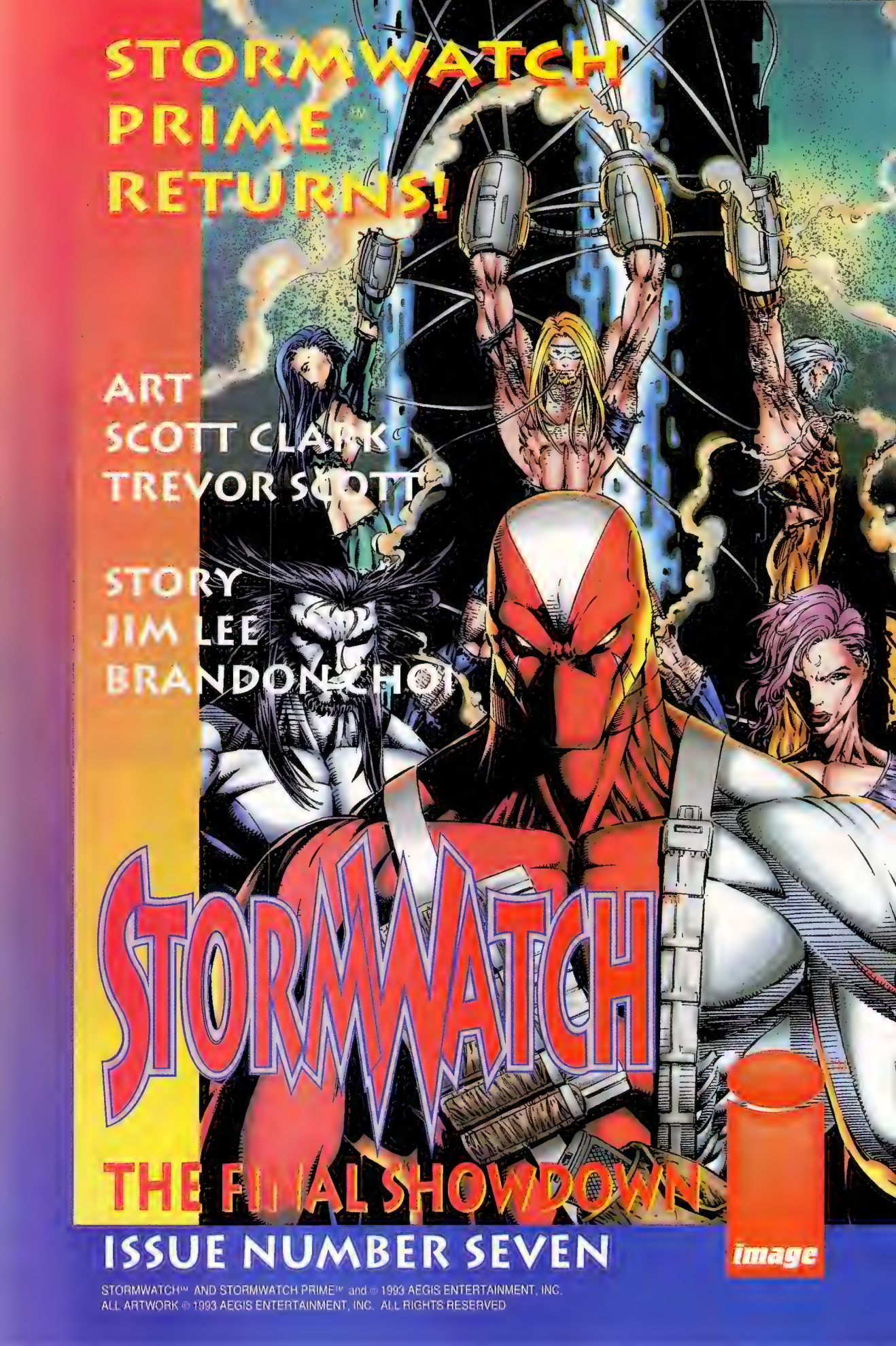
The Renaissance

Regular Valiant readers have probably recognized many of the characters mentioned above. Many villains and supporting characters from the Gold Key series have their respective Valiant counterparts. All of the major supporting characters exist in the Valiant Universe.

Leeja and Senator Clane exist much the same way as they did in their Gold Key days. But even such minor characters like Magnus' friend Timbuc, who has appeared in both *Magnus: Robot Fighter* and *Rai and the Future Force*, have survived. All of Magnus' major villains have endured the transition—even some of the robots! The Malev saga from the Gold Key series has been recounted and updated in Valiant's Magnus series, only this time Malev-6 survived Magnus and Noel's attack; it is still hounding the Earth of 4000 AD in the pages of *Magnus* and *Rai and the Future Force*! The Malev problem will finally be solved in mid-1994 with Valiant's big crossover project for next year, *The Malev War*.

The most astonishing part of Valiant's use of these characters is that they have formed a coherent universe out of three characters who exist in widely disparate times. Gold Key did not have any continuity between its books, whereas that's the linchpin of Valiant's existence. All three former Gold Key characters interact in Valiant's *Unity* crossover, which took place in an updated version of Turok's Lost Valley (now known as the Lost Land). Turok was displaced to the present day at the beginning of his Valiant series, and Solar, while still existing in today's time, is a time-traveler (an ability he first exhibited in Gold Key's *Doctor Solar* #15), in addition to being virtually immortal, so he can easily interact with both Magnus and Turok.

After their success with Gold Key characters, one would expect Valiant to use more of them. However, according to Valiant president Bob Layton, there are no plans to do so in the foreseeable future. The agreement with Western Publishing was crucial to getting Valiant off the ground, but, having established a presence in the marketplace, Valiant feels that it can do just as well, if not better, by developing its own characters. Certainly the success of heroes like X-O Manowar and Rai gives weight to that claim. So, for now, fans of other Gold Key titles such as *Doctor Spektor* or *Dagar the Invincible* are out of luck. On the other hand, Western Publishing just can't seem to abstain from influencing the comics industry—and, as every comics fan knows, very few comics characters stay gone forever. ☆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# of tyrants & TYRANT

Steve Bissette on creator ownership, the predators of the industry, and the birth of his very own *Tyrant*.

By William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert

Steve Bissette has worn many hats in the comic industry. As publisher, self-publisher, artist, and writer, Bissette—at 38 an 18-year veteran of the field—has taken the full measure of the comics medium like few other creators have done.

Bissette, a graduate of the first class of the Joe Kubert School of Cartooning and Graphic Art, is primarily known in comics for his work as a writer, artist, and publisher of horror. He attributes his affinity for the horror and fantasy genres to an early interest in movies. "The thing that had an impact on me was the film *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*," Bissette explains. "I must have been three when I saw it on TV. I was young enough so that I thought it was real, and I thought if my Dad could get me to Coney Island before the dinosaur died I could actually see it! It was really Ray Harryhausen's work, specifically *Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, that had me sitting down drawing dinosaurs and convincing my mother to buy me every dinosaur thing within my reach."

Young Steve Bissette's interest in dinosaurs soon caused him to notice

Tyrant™ & © 1993 S. R. Bissette & SpiderBaby Grafix.

comic books. "The first comic I remember owning was the Classics Illustrated *World Around Us: Prehistoric Animals* special," Bissette recalls. "In hindsight, there were some amazing artists in there, and a lot of them were the ones that had an impact on me. Al Williamson and Reed Crandall had work in that particular book, and I would copy their drawings—I would copy drawings out of any dinosaur books that I could get my hands on."

"But as I grew up it was really horror movies that galvanized my attention," Steve admits. "I was allowed to stay up for the late-night movies as long as my homework was done. At a very young age, I got to see some amazing stuff complete, because they weren't editing the movies for TV at that time. I remember *Black Sunday* having a devastating impact on me. I also saw *Carnival of Souls* in my pre-teen years. Those are the kind of things that I would see that would haunt me for a year. I always read comics, but comics didn't have anywhere near the formative impact that film had on me. For quite a while in high school what I wanted to be doing was making films. I think what got me to step into comics was that it was more accessible. With pen and paper you could tell a story. With film it was much more complicated and expensive than that."

Swamp Thing ™ & © DC Comics.

Even though Bissette's love for film hasn't diminished at all, he still prefers creating in the comics medium over movies. "A fair amount of my work as a writer has been film criticism and interviews with film makers. Comics is a difficult enough business. I have no desire to involve myself with film. My expertise is as a comics storyteller. That is the medium that is the most accessible to me as a creator, and it is also the medium that best allows what I have in my head to be put down in a form that a readership can enjoy. With film, the money, the people, the bureaucracy, the hurdles you have to go through are just too much," Bissette explains.

That's not to say that the comics medium has always been easy for Steve Bissette. He has known the bitter irony of publishing a critical success but suffering financial failure. That's what happened with the horror anthology *Taboo*, which Bissette both edited and published for his company, SpiderBaby Grafix. "I cut my teeth on *Taboo*. I made some horrible mistakes with *Taboo*," he admits. "But although I failed miserably at whatever business goals I had, I feel like aesthetically *Taboo* was a success.

"When I was done as an artist on *Swamp Thing* I had no ethics left. I did not know up from down. I was screwing friends."

"I had an aesthetic agenda going into *Taboo*. I was looking for people that shared that agenda. There were lessons to be learned and I was lucky enough to learn them with *Taboo*."

The joint agreement with the now-defunct comic publisher Tundra to co-publish the horror comic was terminated in early 1993. The title will be completed in 1994 with the release of three or four more issues, which will probably be published in hardcover form.

Despite the hard financial lessons learned from *Taboo*, Bissette prefers the complexities inherent in self-publishing to the restrictions of working for other publishers. In fact, Bissette has become one of the most vocal proponents of creator's rights in the comics industry. "I feel strongly that we should not forget the lessons of prior generations, much as the industry would like those swept under the rug," says Bissette. "I have a need to do my part in leaving an environment behind me when I pass on that is in some way better than the environment I came into when I graduated from the Kubert school.

"We are working in an art form in which the potential has only been scratched, and we are working in an art form in which the potential has constantly been stymied and stifled by an industry that chews up and eats people," elaborates Bissette. "I'm not talking about good versus evil. I'm not talking about the poor lowly noble creator-peasant. It eats up the publishers as well. There are many good people who have really given their best stab at being progressive publishers, and it eats them up. There are as many creators who are predators out there as there are publishers who are predators out there. There are as many editors who are predators out there as there are distributors and retailers who are predatory in their practices. What is important is that there are even more creators and retailers and distributors and publishers who aspire to something better, and I really feel the need to fuel that."

Bissette's critically-acclaimed run on *Swamp Thing*—with writer Alan Moore and artist John Totleben—was both a high point and a low point of his career. "*Swamp Thing* was the greatest chemistry I've ever enjoyed in my life as an artist. The chemistry I enjoyed with John as an artist, the chemistry I enjoyed with Alan—I've never had anything like it before and I never had anything like it after and I probably won't. That was a remarkable period of time," he relates. "But I came away from *Swamp Thing* feeling very bitter and very confused. It has taken me a number of years to come around to accepting my own culpability in that whole process. I signed those contracts, I did that work under the terms [of the contracts], and I'm responsible for that. DC are not villains, they are not the bad guys who took advantage of me."

Following his experience on *Swamp Thing*, Bissette went through a horrible period of burnout. "The rigors of trying to stay on top of a monthly book when it was taking me five weeks or more to pencil an issue took its toll," admits Bissette.

"Certainly the intense focus on a character that belonged to the company took its toll. But what really led to absolute burnout was dealing with the business practices of this industry. When I was done as an artist on *Swamp Thing* I had no ethics left. I did not know up from down. I was screwing friends. The point where I stopped drawing comics for a time was when I was invited to work on an issue of *Scout* by my dear friend Tim Truman. It was the worst thing I could have done. I completely messed up the job. I was horribly late with it. I lied about sending stuff out. It was terrible. At one point Tim very honestly said to me, 'Steve, this is like dealing with an alcoholic or a drug abuser—are you okay?' and no, I wasn't okay. I was not drinking, I was not doing drugs, but I was not OK." Bissette eventually realized that he simply could not function under the constraints of working for other publishers on properties that were not his own.

This was a turning point in Bissette's career, and instead of giving up he turned his creative energies in a different direction. "That led to my pulling out of drawing comics for quite a long period of time and focusing on writing. Writing recharged my batteries. I jumped into writing with a real passion. I felt real fortunate, especially after the first two to three years. I was being paid fairly well to learn a craft that most people pay colleges to learn, and I feel like I evolved into a fairly good writer," Bissette says proudly. "I feel fairly confident in that now. That is a skill I didn't have before, and I probably wouldn't have [developed] it without having worked with Alan Moore and having been lucky enough to work with Karen Berger, an editor at DC."

Using the skills he has learned in the past few years, Bissette will be self-publishing his own next project—*Tyrant*—which he is firmly committed to writing, drawing, and researching himself. "If you are going to self-publish, [then] you better do it yourself!" Bissette exclaims. "I understand why the comics industry has calcified these roles—you are a penciler, you are an inker, you are a colorist, you are a letterer—but I think it is very rare that any work of real value or lasting vision comes out of that system.

"Most of the potent works in comics came about because one of the players has an overwhelming vision or because a single creator gets to a point in their career where they are able to direct the project. With *Tyrant,* I'm doing the whole megillah. I'm even lettering it myself. I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to sit down and work on pages on *Tyrant,* and not have to call anybody, not have to get these pages to a stage where I can mail them to the letterer so that when they come back I can remember what I meant to be doing on the page. Most of all, the most strenuous part of this business for me has really become all the crap that goes into getting a project out of a starting gate. The association—the courtship—the dances—the contracts—the silences—the abuses—the buttering up—the whole trip. I am sick to death of that."

Tyrant is about the birth, life, and death of a Tyrannosaurus rex. The book will be published by Bisette's own SpiderBaby Grafix; it is slated to be 32 pages in black and white with a color cover, but the price and release date have yet to be determined. The story is located in Alberta, Canada, the area of North America where the most complete skeletons of T. rex have been found. Bissette explains: "I decided to set *Tyrant* in Alberta because at that time, 65 to 70 million years ago, there was a great ocean that occupied the middle of what we now call North America. It allows me to establish a hunting ground for my character which would cover the animal life that would live in the coastal area of an ocean as well as animals from the mountain regions... I have been doing my homework for this all my life," he continues enthusiastically. "Since I was three years old I wanted to find a way to make a living by drawing dinosaurs, and here I am.

"Since I was three years old I wanted to find a way to make a living by drawing dinosaurs, and here I am."

"I want to saturate the reader and myself by doing the comic in the sensibility of what it might be like to be this fantastic animal without resorting to the science fiction archetypes that our culture traditionally imposes on these kind of characters—*The Lost World, King Kong, Jurassic Park,* what have you—stories that graft human characters into an environment...which reduces the dinosaurs to mindless eating machines. I think there is a very rich story here. I have it worked out from the beginning to the middle to the very end in my head, and I've been spending a good chunk of time over the last two and a half years beginning to put that down on paper. Thanks to *1963*—thanks to Jim Valentino—thanks to being able to work again with my friends Rick Veitch and Alan Moore—my situation is such that I'm ready to jump into doing *Tyrant*."

Tyrant will be as historically and scientifically accurate as possible. Bissette has even been getting input from a paleontologist. "It is as accurate as I can make it, but almost everything we know—or everything we believe we know—is based on educated conjecture," explains Bissette. "I intend to sell this beyond the comic market, so I want to make damn sure that I've done my homework. I will be inviting any reader with information—be they a paleontologist, layman, or just a curious kid—to write in with their comments about what I got right, what I got wrong. That will be part of the ongoing growth that any comic goes through. I'm sure that what my first issue looks like will be light years away from where I'm at by issue #20 or #30.

"For issue #1 I spent about 5 months researching embryology. Almost all of issue #1 takes place inside the egg. You watch the growth of this creature that becomes my lead character. By the end of issue #1 he pops out of the egg. This is not dry scientific text. I am approaching it with the same energy and intent that I brought to writing *Aliens: Tribes* for Dark Horse, or that I brought to the issues of *Swamp Thing*—that I bring to anything I write."

The bimonthly black-and-white series will be finite, but at this point Bissette doesn't know how long it will take to tell the story. "Dave Sim (the creator and publisher of *Cerebus*) has been pushing me to make the 15- to 30-year commitment," Bissette says. "I'm going in with a clear story in mind and taking the luxury of telling it in the time and space it requires. When I started this I envisioned maybe 12 to 20 issues. As of issue #8, he's 5 days old. I don't even want to conjecture how many issues it is going to take to tell the full story."

Most of the 32-page issues of *Tyrant* will contain a backup feature, allowing Bissette to experiment with the effects of varying the length of the installments. "I've decided that no chapter will be shorter than 24 pages because I don't want to have my readers feeling like they've been short-changed. No chapter will be longer than 32 pages within the regular flow of the book, although if I hit a story point where I want 48 pages,

I'll do my first annual," explains Bissette. "That allows me to [stay in control] and call the shots. There is nothing to say that, if I have an issue of *Tyrant* in which the Tyrant story, come hell or high water, is no longer than 16 pages, I'll draw another story in that particular issue. My commitment is to deliver 32 pages of the best material I can to my readership every other month.

"I don't know if I'm going to push any envelopes or not, but there has always been an economy of storytelling required in America that we don't see required, for instance, in Japan. You have never seen anything in American comics to compare with the sort of sequences they will have where the falling of a leaf over as many as 10 to 20 pages is essential to the storytelling in manga. Not just in terms of atmosphere or ambiance, but in terms of hard storytelling—a narrative point being made by the deliberate slowness of that sequence. I'm probably going to indulge in that kind of stuff. If I want myself and my readers to have some understanding of how I think this animal perceives the world then I'm certainly going to be playing with my reader's perception of time and space, and that will require a very different approach to the comic book page and the comic book pace than I've ever been able to play with before.

"I think that the key works that we all look upon—whether it be *Maus* or *Watchmen*—they all have a place in our minds and hearts because they awakened our senses."

"I think that the key works that we all look upon—whether it be *Maus,* or *Watchmen,* or the work that is being done on *From Hell,* or a lot of the work being published by Fantagraphics and Kitchen Sink, or Chester Brown's *Yummy Fur*—these all have a place in our minds and hearts because they awakened our senses. That, to me, is my mission as a storyteller. I want to awaken people, I want to awaken myself, and I think that is the potential of comics. I think we are able to do it more than film, more than TV, because those media are so straitjacketed by their industries. I think in comics we have more freedom than that. We have to learn how to stretch our wings."

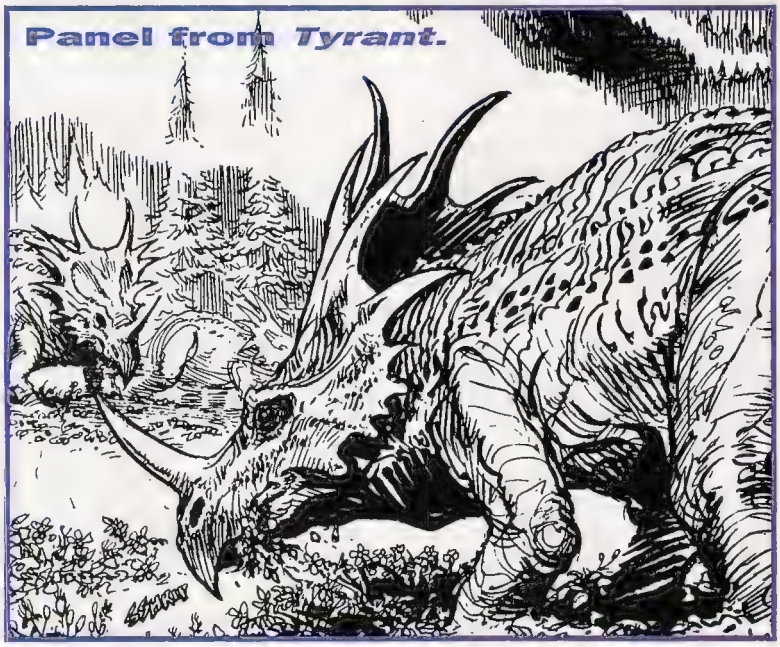
Despite past financial hardships in publishing, Bissette is determined to remain true to his mission as a comics storyteller. He intends to avoid anything which might distract him from the comics medium itself, including the possibility of lucrative licensing. "Those things are not attractive to me. A lot of that comes from the hard lessons I saw with Mirage," Bissette elaborates. "It has taken me years to get back to the drawing board. I am trying very hard not to embrace things that are going to take me away from the drawing board again. Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman very quickly found themselves the proprietors of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles [instead of] the creators of the Turtles. They no longer had the time to draw them, and by the time they finished dealing with all the business practices necessary to maintain all the licensing of the Turtles, the last thing they wanted to do was sit down to a drawing board and draw the Turtles. We'll see if I can avoid that temptation!"

Even given Bissette's love of film, and of the technical advancements which made possible the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park,* we won't be seeing a *Tyrant* movie any time soon. "I would love to see the techniques that brought those beautiful animals to life in *Jurassic Park* put to work on my story," Bissette admits. "But at the same time I know that there is no way you could boil it down to an effective two-hour screenplay. Whatever film would be made of this would hopefully be a real feast for the eyes and hopefully would knock people out of their seats, but ultimately it would have very little to do with *Tyrant.*

"I was asked point-blank by Kevin Eastman's attorney during my association with Tundra, why wouldn't I let *Taboo* be made into a movie? and my reply was much the same," Bissette elaborates. "Because it would be a movie that had nothing to do with *Taboo.* There is no way that the movie I would envision affiliated with the name *Taboo* would have anything to do with what got put on the screen. I would love to see a *Taboo* movie—you get David Lynch, you get the Japanese filmmaker who made *Tetsuo (The Iron Man)*—you get the most messed-up film makers on planet Earth—you give them money and you give them screen time and you put it together so that people are crawling out of the theater. Nobody is going to make that movie. They are going to take the name 'Taboo' and they are going to treat it as a licensable commodity, and they are going to turn it into *Tales from the Darkside* or *Creepshow* and at the end of it I don't even have *Taboo.*

"Often, to get films or TV shows made, you have to sign on the dotted line and it ain't yours anymore. That is not enticing to me. What I'm going to do on the comic page is going to be different—and, in my mind—better than anything that could be done in 90 to 120 minutes of running time with this concept. But I'd love to see the movie!" ☆

William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert are regular contributors to Wizard.



Panel from *Tyrant*.

HEAVY SKINS

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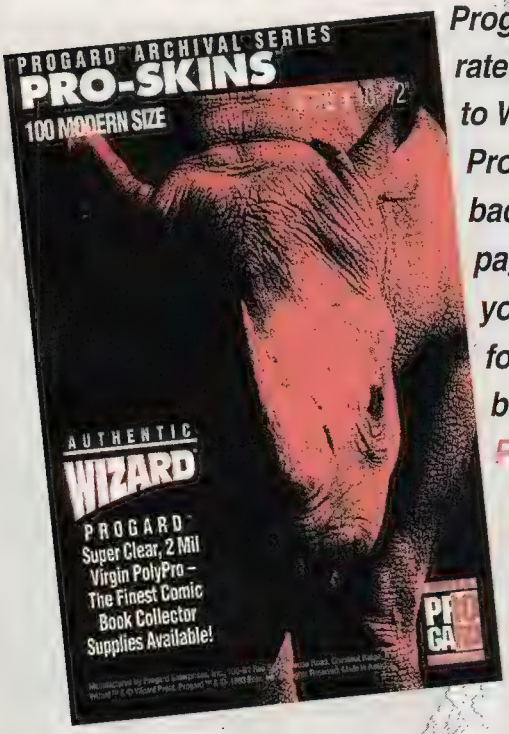

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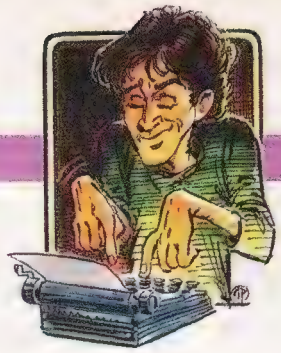
PALMER'S PICKS



A Long Shot Comic Makes Good

Most self-publishers in the comics business are short on one thing, and it usually isn't talent or determination—it's money. There are several ways for aspiring cartoonists to get around this problem. Some choose to rough it out until their comic catches on, while others look to jobs outside the comic industry for a source of income. Very few attempt to support themselves within the industry and stay in the business long enough to fund their self-published comic. Colleen Doran is one of the few to choose this last option. She did so for *A Distant Soil*, which she self-publishes while freelancing at the larger publishing companies on various issues of *Sandman* and *Shade the Changing Man*.

A Distant Soil has traveled a very rocky road to get where it is today. Colleen Doran has been a professional illustrator since the age of fifteen, and has been involved in comics since college. She came up with the concept for *A Distant Soil* as a teenager and eventually got her comic published by Warp Graphics, the publishing company founded by Elfquest creators Wendy and Richard Pini. Doran drew an insert that appeared in *Elfquest* #16, which led to a regular *A Distant Soil* series in 1983. While Doran plotted and drew the comic, the dialogue was written by Richard Pini, since it was believed that Doran was too young and inexperienced to handle it.

Doran and Warp parted ways when the company attempted to copyright and trademark *A Distant Soil* in their name. The split was anything but easy, and, as it turned out, it was only the first occasion Doran would have to battle for her rights as a creator. She landed at Donning Company, a book publisher with a new graphic novel line called Starblaze Graphics. The artist redrew and rewrote the comic for a color graphic novel after reaching an agreement with Warp, but the disputes over who had created and who owned *A Distant Soil* continued.

Doran eventually settled with Warp, but she ran into more trouble with Donning. Their graphic novel line was mismanaged and misdirected; eventually, it was sold to Schiffer Publishing. Apparently, Schiffer was only supposed to distribute Donning's line of graphic novels, but in reality, the company took over the publishing rights without clearance from the creators of the graphic novels. One of these creators was Doran, who filed a suit along with eleven others involved in the books issued by Donning.

Doran tried again, this time publishing *A Distant Soil* through her own Aria Press. She reformatted and redrew parts of her two color graphic novels, "Immigrant Song" and "Knights of the Angel," in black and white, and she drew an all-new backup story called "Seasons of Spring." The first issue appeared in June of 1991, and four issues have appeared so far. The delay between issues can mostly be accounted for by Doran's choosing to support her comic by taking on freelance work from other companies. She has worked on such books as *Sandman*, *Shade the Changing Man*, and *Hellraiser*, giving herself time to fine-tune *A Distant Soil*.

The actual story of *A Distant Soil* is best described as fantasy, although it sometimes borrows from science fiction, adventure, and drama. The pure fantasy of the "Immigrant Song" and "Knights of the Angel" stories are contrasted in each issue with the down-to-earth "Seasons of Spring," which recounts the earlier years of certain characters in the other tales. It is evident that Doran has a larger saga planned, since there

A Distant Soil is best described as fantasy, although it sometimes borrows from science fiction, adventure, and drama.

are many openings and ambiguities in the story which could possibly be filled in later.

On the artistic side, there aren't enough words to describe Colleen Doran's skill in storytelling, composition, and attention to detail. Her panels flow seamlessly into one another, depicting a clear and interesting story. She has a detailed and polished style that is distinct and easily recognizable. There is an attention to detail in her work, ranging from the subtle expressions and gestures of her characters to the small nuances of different locations and background objects. All of these qualities combine to make Colleen Doran's work, especially *A Distant Soil*, a joy to read and experience.

Update: Those of you interested in Tragedy Strikes Press, which I featured in issue #25, will be pleased to know that the company has been reorganized into Black Eye Productions. They plan to publish three quarterly titles initially, two of which are from the Tragedy Strikes line. Their first offering is the second issue of Dylan Horrocks' *Pickle*, picking up from the first issue published by Tragedy Strikes. The new issue should be in stores right now. This month, look for the first issue of an all-new hybrid magazine and anthology comic called *Sputnik*. And next month, be sure to hunt down the first issue of *Sin Comics*, a brand-new series from the warped mind of Jason Stephens, featuring the same characters from *Sin*, as well as some new faces. Black Eye will be offering Tragedy Strikes' entire backlist through their catalogue and through their newsletter, *Eye Drops*. It's free, so there's no reason why you shouldn't ask for one by writing to: Black Eye Productions, 338 Kribs Street, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada N3C 3J3. All catalogue and newsletter requests that were sent to Tragedy Strikes at the address in *Wizard* #25 will be forwarded to Black Eye.

Next month: I'll feature Dan Clowes' *Eightball* from Fantagraphics Books. As usual, I'm open to reading your suggestions or listening to whatever is on your mind. Just drop a line to Palmer's Picks c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Road, Bldg B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977. ☆

Tom Palmer Jr. is a freelance writer currently attending college in Fredericksburg, Va.

Tom's Recommended Reading

- The Aria Press edition of *A Distant Soil* is the most readily available of the various versions of the story. Five black and white issues have been published so far, several of which are already into their second printings. Individual issues can be ordered from Aria Press for $1.75, which includes shipping fees. Subscriptions are also available, at $12.50 for eight issues. The address for Aria Press is 12638-28 Jefferson Avenue, Suite 173, Newport News, VA 23602-4316.
- Aria Press offers several other *Distant Soil* items, as well as other work by Colleen Doran. There are two t-shirts available (for $14 each) and two postcards (for $1 each). Copies of Anne Rice's *Master of the Rampling Gate* (from Innovation, with painted artwork by Doran) and *Sandman:* "Dream Country" (published by DC, with a story illustrated by Doran) are also available.
- There is also the Distant Soil Fan Club, which includes many benefits available exclusively to members, including a t-shirt, an autographed print, and a bimonthly newsletter. Memberships cost $20, which can be sent to Aria Press at the above address. Colleen Doran also offers some of her original artwork through Aria Press. Prices are listed in issues of *A Distant Soil*.
- Colleen Doran's other comic book work has been published by many different publishers in over fifty different titles. Some of these include *Sandman*, *Shade the Changing Man*, and *Eclipso* from DC; *Amazing Spider-Man*, *X-Factor*, and *Excalibur* at Marvel; and a back-up story in Jo Duffy's *Nestrobber* from Blue Sky Blue. Most of these comics should be available as back issues at your local comic book store.
- The original Warp Graphics edition of *A Distant Soil* ran for nine magazine-sized issues from 1983 to 1985. The story was scripted by Richard Pini and is very different from the Donning graphic novels and the Aria Press version. The art is in black and white, reproduced from the original pencil artwork. The comic has no relationship to the current version of the story, and most of the issues are very hard to find.
- There are two full-color *Distant Soil* graphic novels published by Donning/Starblaze. The books, "Immigrant Song" and "Knights of the Angel," were distributed to bookstores as well as comic stores. However, they may be hard to find, since Donning no longer exists.

A Distant Soil and all characters shown ™ & © Colleen Doran. Published by Aria Press.

Sneak A Peek Behind The Scenes Of The StormWatch Universe!

STORMWATCH™ SOURCEBOOK

image

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The Video Board-game
Nightmare
What's your worst Nightmare...

...You scum sucking

The Gatekeeper, host of the video board game NIGHTMARE, wants to know about your dreams. But not just any dreams. He wants to hear about the kind that keep you up at night. The kind that wake you up in a cold sweat. In other words, he wants to hear about your ***WORST NIGHTMARE.*** And if your story is so vivid and frightening that our judges are too scared to go out at night, then you could win the GRAND PRIZE of an amazing Hitachi home entertainment system, complete with giant projection TV and hi-fi VCR. It's the kind of set up that will let you play the ultimate game of NIGHTMARE.

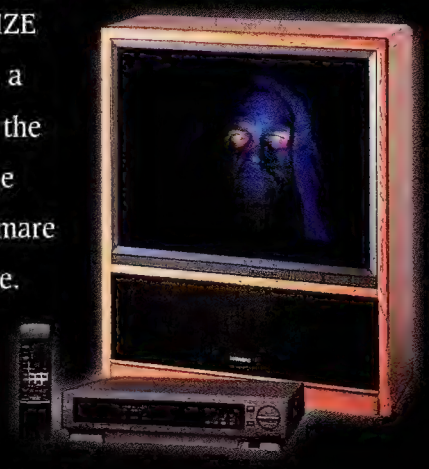
Here's how you do it.

Tell us your worst nightmare by creating a storyboard that depicts the sequence of events of your dream. The storyboard will be a series of drawings with captions that explain your nightmare both in visual and written form. However, if your artistic talents are limited to stick figures and fingerpainting, then you can just write a story about your worst nightmare. Whichever way you do it, **just make sure that we receive your entry by** ***February 15, 1994.***

maggots.

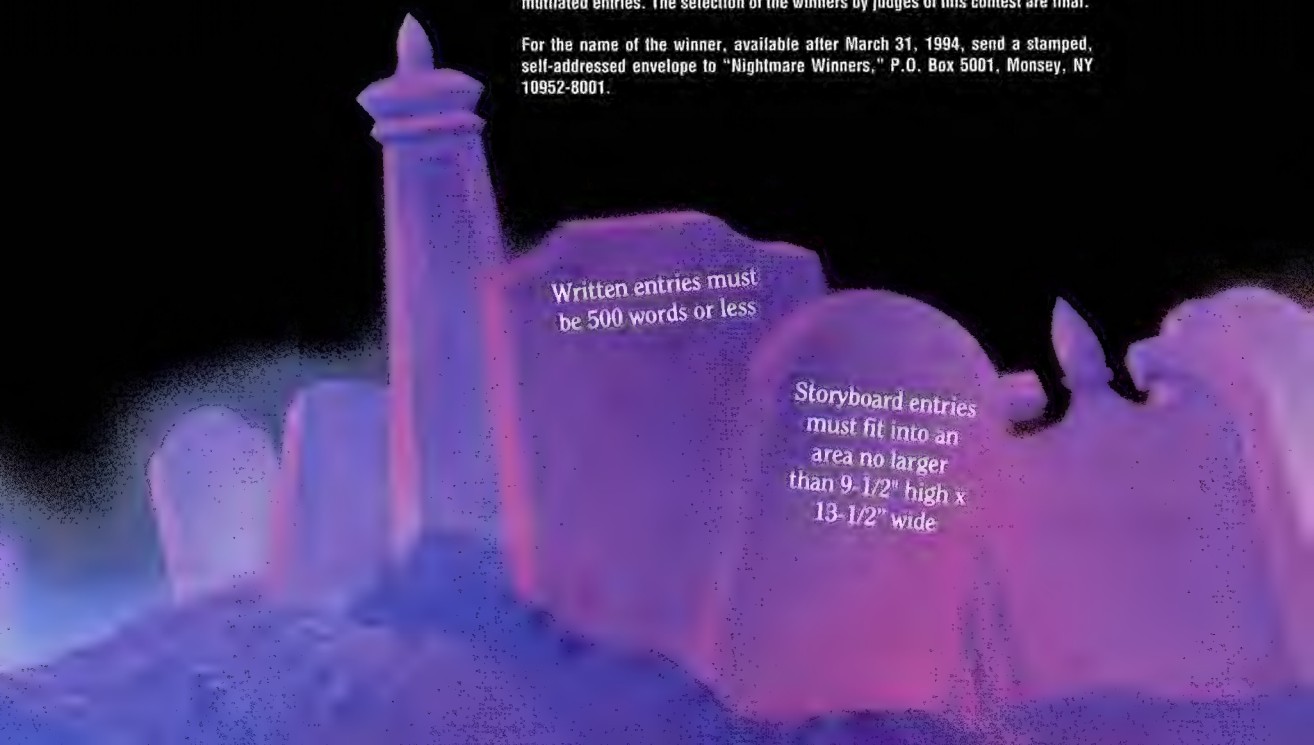
Here's what you could win.

The most colorful, frightening nightmare will be selected as the GRAND PRIZE winner by our judges. The GRAND PRIZE winner will win the ultimate home theater adventure, a Hitachi giant projection TV and VCR so they can play the video board game NIGHTMARE on the big screen. The GRAND PRIZE winner will also have his or her nightmare published in an upcoming issue of WIZARD Magazine. In addition, other contest winners will receive NIGHTMARE games, baseball caps, T-shirts, posters, and more.



RULES FOR "NIGHTMARE" PROMOTION
No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, and their immediate families. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code and telephone # on a plain piece of paper and include with your entry. Each entry must be packaged individually and sent to **"NIGHTMARE CONTEST", P.O. BOX 761, MONSEY, NY 10952-0761.** All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by **FEBRUARY 15, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. The selection of the winners by judges of this contest are final.

For the name of the winner, available after March 31, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Nightmare Winners," P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.



COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

Every month in *Wizard* we throw the hardest questions your way, and only a select few have what it takes to score a perfect 30 points. This month we're grading you alongside the worst live-action superhero TV shows and movies ever made. In other words, the crappier the flick, the higher your score. Good luck!

How well did you fare?

score	rank
0-6	***Batman Returns*: Why does this movie stink so bad? Two words: penguin commandos.**
7-13	***Hulk TV movie with Thor in it*: Factor in a low budget, a cheap knockoff of Thor that has almost zero in common with Marvel's Thor, and all you get is a mess that is pretty unwatchable.**
14-22	***Legends of the Super Heroes*: For those of you not familiar with this abomination, it was aired in the late '70s/early '80s and featured characters from the Super Friends cartoon show. 97% unwatchable.**
23-29	***Spider-Man TV show*: It stuck pretty close to the comic, but the rotten special effects, Spidey's sucky costume (utility belt on the outside and web shooters that shoot rope? What is this, The Electric Company?), and bad acting all contributed to one class-A loser.**
30	***Captain America*: The fact that this movie was even made is proof that civilization is crumbling. Not enough room here to list what's so bad about it.**

1.) Which one of these villains suffered from acute arachnophobia?
A) Venom
B) Doctor Octopus
C) The Shocker
D) Kraven the Hunter

2.) Hercules' secret identity is:
A) Harold Ease
B) Howard Claus
C) Harry Anderson
D) Harry Cleese

3.) How did Magnus get to the year 4001?
A) He was born in that Era.
B) Ivar brought him there.
C) Solar brought him there after Unity.
D) He just hung around comic stores waiting for *Wetworks* #1 to come out, and before he knew it, boom, it was the year 4001 (and still no sign of *Wetworks*).

4.) Who killed Al Simmons?
A) The Violator
B) Shaft
C) Billy Kincaid
D) Chapel

5.) Upon Illyana Rasputin's death, Professor X placed what device on her body?
A) The Molecular Rearranger
B) Killgore
C) The Molecular Cohesion Unit
D) The "in-the-shell" egg scrambler

6.) What color is resistant to the Ray's power?
A) White
B) Blue
C) Black
D) Green

7.) Who are the three regular members of Secret Weapons?
A) Solar, X-O, Magnus
B) Stronghold, Geoff, Livewire
C) Bloodshot, Stronghold, Wirewhip
D) Solar, Geoff, Strongbox

8.) Which mutant was the first to be offered sanctuary on Magneto's Avalon?
A) Exodus
B) Phantazia
C) The Toad
D) Cannonball

9.) What government group funded the Weapon X project?
A) Department H
B) CIA
C) Shield
D) All of the above

10.) Which character is a classically trained actor?
A) Simon Williams
B) Alfred Pennyworth

C) Basilo Karlo
D) Both B & C

11.) The name of the angel that tried to kill Spawn in *Spawn* #9 was:
A) Angela
B) Angelica
C) Angethna
D) Angeilla

12.) What person could have saved Superman from dying, but chose not to?
A) Bloodwynd
B) Green Lantern
C) Waverider
D) Maxima

13.) Who is believed to be dead, but really isn't?
A) The Human Torch I
B) Robert Banner
C) Tony Stark
D) The Red Skull

14.) Which of the following characters is not a Savage Land mutant?
A) Barbarus
B) Gaza
C) Slitherer
D) The Piper

15.) Who was the first patient at Arkham Asylum?
A) The Joker
B) "Mad Dog" Hawkins
C) Mr. Freeze
D) Professor Milo

16.) Spider-Man lost the Captain Universe power after his battle with:
A) Magneto
B) The Hulk
C) The Juggernaut
D) The Tri-Sentinel

17.) Magnus Robot Fighter's parents are?
A) Sting & Kris
B) Stronghold & Livewire
C) Solar & Gayle
D) Torque & Kris

18.) What is Apokolip's sister planet?
A) Cairn
B) OA
C) New Genesis
D) Almerac

19.) Tako Konishi is:
A) The Collective Man
B) Dr. Mirage
C) Rai
D) Kato

20.) Miguel O'Hara (*Spider-Man 2099*) was addicted to what drug?
A) Crack
B) Rapture
C) Ice
D) Venom

21.) The Red Skull controls which organization?
A) Hydra
B) The Watchdogs
C) Aim
D) Both A & B

22.) Morg killed:
A) Tyrant
B) Terrax
C) Nova II
D) Air-Walker

23.) In his first issue, Prime beat up:
A) his gym teacher
B) the neighborhood bully
C) his older brother
D) both A & B

24.) Hobgoblin was a member of what group?
A) Lethal Legion
B) The Sinister Six
C) Masters of Evil
D) The Village People

25.) Who helped Bloodshot escape from Project: Rising Spirit?
A) Solar
B) Geoff
C) Magnus
D) Armstrong

26.) The Next Men once encountered what you might call their counterparts in which country?
A) Canada
B) Argentina
C) Germany
D) Russia

27.) Who killed Torque?
A) The Eggbreakers
B) H.A.R.D. Corps
C) Erica Pierce
D) Master Darque

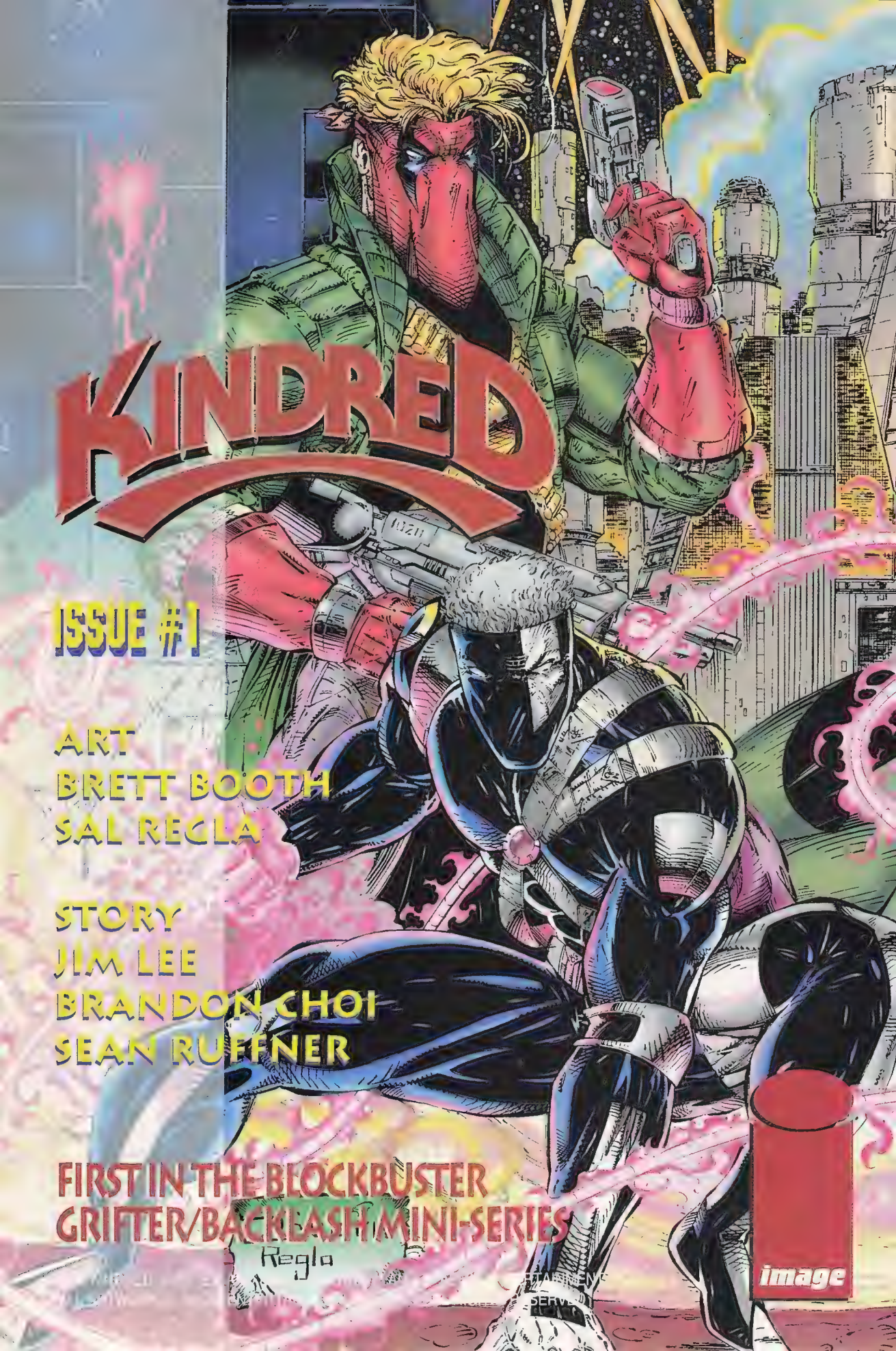
28.) How many arms does Stryker of Cyberforce have?
A) Two
B) Four
C) One
D) Five

29.) The ex-Galactus herald Destroyer made his first appearance in the pages of:
A) *Fantastic Four*
B) *The Silver Surfer* (first series)
C) *Journey into Mystery*
D) *Tales to Astonish*

30.) Aside from Hardcase, who is the only surviving member of The Squad?
A) Nightman
B) Starburst
C) Firearm
D) Spectral

☆

A	N	S	W	E	R	S
1.) B	2.) D	3.) C	4.) D	5.) C	6.) C	7.) B	8.) B	9.) B
10.) D	11.) A	12.) C	13.) A	14.) C	15.) B	16.) D	17.) D	18.) C
19.) C	20.) B	21.) D	22.) C	23.) A	24.) B	25.) B	26.) D	27.) A
28.) B	29.) C	30.) B						


KINDRED
ISSUE #1
ART
BRETT BOOTH
SAL REGLA
STORY
JIM LEE
BRANDON CHOI
SEAN RUFFNER
FIRST IN THE BLOCKBUSTER
GRIFTER/BACKLASH MINI-SERIES
Regla
image

TOYING around • around • around • aroun

WITH BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

CHRISTMAS' HOTTEST TOYS

It's getting dangerously close to that time of year when Christmas presents are bought like candy. As a matter of fact, a large percentage of all toys bought in a one-year period are bought at Christmas time. So, without further ado, *Wizard* presents to you the playthings which the big companies are pushing this Christmas season.

Kenner's success this winter will hinge on the most successful film of the summer and the second most successful film in history: *Jurassic Park*. "The Jurassic Park line is selling well at all price levels," says Leslie Amadio, a Kenner spokesperson. "All of the toys are popular, although humans sell the best because of their low prices."

Also on tap for Kenner is the Nerf Arrowstar Gatling Unit. "It's going to be a great, great Christmas item," says Amadio. This toy is a rifle-like object that can rapidly fire six Nerf "arrows" at its intended target. Its mechanisms are simple: just pull back the rear handle and the air-pumped arrows fly off the rotating magazine. And fly they do—they reach up to 30 feet! (We actually tested this thing in our offices and, yes, they do go that far.) The best part about this toy is that it's a Nerf—product, which means it's fairly harmless for children who are six or older.

Kirk Bozigian, Hasbro's vice president of boys' toys marketing, has high hopes for the G.I. Joe line, particularly its Street Fighter II figures. "Our product was flying off the shelves in August, and it has been catching everyone by surprise because no one has made a major brand out of a video game before," Bozigian says. "Blanka looks like he's the number one character because he looks unlike any other figure."

Bozigian also says the Electronic Talking G.I. Joe, specifically the Battle Command Duke, is also doing well, and will be a big item in the holiday season. "As far as vehicles go for that line, I think the Ghoststriker Jet will be phenomenal as well," says Bozigian.

© & ™ Nerf

Kenner's Nerf Arrowstar Gatling Unit is fun for the warrior in all of us!

As to whether the high price tags of the large Joes and vehicles would deter people from buying them, Bozigian says, "That's never been the case in the fourth quarter. It is a problem early in the year, but it's never the case around Christmas time."

Also coming this Christmas from Hasbro: a new twist on an old toy, the new Transformers' Megatron. Older toy buffs might recall that the first Megatron figure from the 1980s transformed into a pistol. Now it's been retooled to turn into M1 Abrams tank. "It makes sounds as you manipulate and transform it, so you have no buttons to push," Bozigian says.

Hasbro is also handling the action figures for Tim Burton's film, *Nightmare Before Christmas*. "It's a very different type of product line for us," says Bozigian. "We're used to conflict-oriented 'good versus evil' products, and this is not like that at all."

Blanka © & ™ 1993 Capcom U.S.A. Inc.

Blanka is currently the hottest figure from Hasbro's Street Fighter II line.

Playmates is riding high off of its popular Star Trek: The Next Generation toy line. With an additional 22 figures and five new accessories to play with this holiday season, the line's popularity shows no signs of letting up. It includes the newly-produced Transporter Room, in which, by means of lights and mirrors, figures will appear and disappear as they are "beamed down." The collector's set of the Classic Star Trek figures and bridge, limited to 200,000 in number, is sure to make toy hobbyists go bonkers.

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles line is still going strong for Playmates. With 149 figures and 29 accessories available for TMNT, Ron Antonette, a spokesperson for Playmates, says that the new Ninja Action Turtles will be the ones to look out for. These versions of Don, Leo, Mike, and Raph do actual flips, cartwheels, and somersaults when you push down on their heads.

When asked what product he would bet the farm on this Christmas, Antonette replied staunchly, "Definitely the Star Trek Transporter Room."

Mattel is also ready for the Christmas season with its Demolition Man action figure line, based on the futuristic Sylvester Stallone/Wesley Snipes action film. This line will have multiple versions of John Spartan (Stallone's character) and Simon Phoenix (Snipe's character), much like Mattel's Last Action Hero and Kenner's Batman figures. These figures will also have realistic sculpting.

As for Toy Biz, according to Elaine Wellman, all of its X-Men figures are scheduled to be released by Christmas, but nothing is definite. Toy Biz also has two new 10-inch figures coming out: a Sabretooth and Cyclops figure.

As far as girl's toys are concerned, Toy Biz has Caboodles, which are flashy make-up cases geared towards those

of the pre-teen age and older. Also available are Mini-Caboodles, which are separate jewelry-like playsets that expose girls to other worlds of fantasy and opulence.

Mattel's Happy Holiday Barbie has always sold through the roof since its inception six years ago. This year, she is dressed in a lovely red party dress trimmed with poinsettia flowers and golden trim. A good present for any girl, young or old, Barbie, as corny as it sounds, brings a smile to everyone's face.

For Playmates, the hot girls toy will be Baby Burpy Doll, who can be fed with her milk bottle—the milk "disappears" and her tummy grows round and full (with air). Afterwards, you pat her back and—surprise!—she burps.

Hasbro's hot girls toy will be Puppy Surprise, which is a line of soft animals which give birth. Bozigian says it did well last year and this year, and that they've extended the line to feature new animals like rabbits and teddy bears. And the Cabbage Patch Kids still endure to capture a part of the girls' toys market.

Kenner is also keeping in tune with animals with its Littlest Pet Shop, which are animal dolls for girls, as well as boys, who cannot have pets. While not the real thing, these toys might prove to be ample surrogates.

With all of the diverse product out on the market, is this Christmas going to be the biggest yet? Bozigian says no. "It's going to be an interesting Christmas for boys' action toys, that's for sure," he says. "I think there will be more concepts that will be successful this year, but I'm not sure that the total dollars brought in will be bigger than any other year. This year, we'll have seven or eight boys' concepts successfully competing with one another in the fourth quarter."

Let the toy playing begin.

RUNE © & ™ 1993 MALIBU COMICS

PRIME © & ™ 1993 ULTRAVERSE

Create Your Own Ultraverse Figure Contest! Be the envy of your friends and create a Rune and/or Prime figure! Send in a photo of your figure, and you could win some fantastic prizes. Whaddaya waiting for? Get to it!

Ultraverse Contest

Got a little free time? Good, 'cause our buddies over at Malibu are sponsoring an Ultraverse-themed "create your own figure" contest. What you have to do is make your own Prime or Rune action figure out of an already-existing action figure, and send a clear, in-focus, color photo of your entry (or entries) to: Toying Around Ultraverse Contest, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977. The best figure in each category will win a framed page of original art from one of the Ultraverse titles, signed by the artist! Everyone who enters will receive a certificate of thanks for taking part in this contest. All entries must be received by December 13, 1993, and the winners will be displayed in *Wizard* #31. Good luck!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and their immediate families. All entries become the property of Wizard Press. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the contest winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. Why are you reading this fine print? Get to work on them figures! Offer void where prohibited, and Wizard does not take responsibility for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries.

Figure of the Month

This month, every figure that sees print wins a copy of the *X-O Manowar* trade paperback, signed by X-O co-creator Bob Layton, and a very spiffy Wizard baseball cap, signed by our very own Big Cheese, Gareb Shamus. The winning figure this month wins all that cool stuff plus a *Gold Deathmate* prologue, signed by the Valiant creative team.

Hey, Joseph and Rob! We seem to have lost your full addresses. We don't wanna cheat you out of your prizes, so write in and tell us where you're at.

D'oh! SuperHomer comes from Bob Torregrossa of Staten Island, N.Y. We have no idea what figure's body he used, but the head is pretty obvious.

Joseph Brown of Stoughton, Mass., crafted this Starhawk figure from a Silver Surfer figure. Great job, Joseph!

WINNER! We have no clue what this incredible War Machine figure was made from, but it sure looks good. Congrats go to Rob Roemer of Lexington, Ky.

POWER UP!

By Jason R. Rich

November's Hot Game Picks

'Tis the season for fast-action martial arts video games, and *Mortal Kombat* (available for most popular gaming systems), along with *Street Fighter II: Turbo* (Super NES) and *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition* (Genesis), are at the top of many gamers' holiday gift lists.

Mortal Kombat, the new, much-hyped game from Acclaim Entertainment, features digitized human characters, each of which has an arsenal of basic fighting moves, combination maneuvers, Special Moves, one special weapon, and a Finishing Move. The goal of this exciting one- or two-player cartridge is to become the champion fighter at the Shaolin Tournament for the Martial Arts.

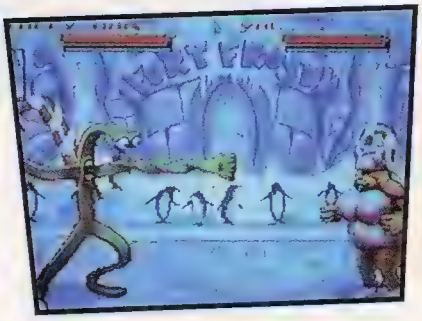
Aside from *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter II*, there are well over a dozen other high-action fighting game carts available for the popular gaming systems. Each game offers a slightly different play experience. *Clay Fighter* (Interplay) for the Super NES, and coming in early '94 for the Genesis, takes fighting to its wackiest extreme, using original claymation characters that have been digitized with rotoscoping technology. *Clay Fighter* offers fighting action mixed with cartoon-like sound effects and humorous graphics.

Eternal Champions for the Genesis is a 24-meg fighting game featuring nine original characters, each of whom has 35 fighting moves. The game offers three fighting speeds and supports both the new six-button controllers and the Menacer video game accessory. Each main character appears extra large on the screen and is highly detailed, and the background graphics are colorful and appear multi-dimensional.

Genesis' awesome *Aladdin*!

Less violent, but equally superior, game carts available this holiday season include movie adaptations and game sequels. For the Sega Genesis, *Jurassic Park* (Sega), *Sonic Spinball* (Sega), *Madden NFL '94* (Electronic Arts), *Cool Spot* (Virgin), and *Disney's Aladdin* (Sega/Virgin/Disney) are among the hottest titles, while for the Super NES system, *Super Mario All-Stars* (Nintendo), *Super Empire Strikes Back* (LucasArts), *Star Fox* (Nintendo), *Lufia & The Fortress of Doom* (Taito), and *Cool Spot* (Virgin) are on *Wizard*'s most-recommended list if you're looking for exciting game play, superior graphics, cool sound, and an ongoing challenge.

Disney's Aladdin for the Genesis was a joint effort between Sega of America, Virgin Games, Disney Software, and Walt Disney Animation. Using new technology pioneered by Virgin Games, over 15,000 original, hand-drawn animation cells were incorporated into the game. These animation cells were created by a team of Disney animators, many of whom actually worked on the *Aladdin* motion picture. This game marks the first time that this new digitization technology has been used for a game, although Virgin Games, as well as other developers, are already working on other animated titles



Clay Fighter for the Super NES, by Interplay

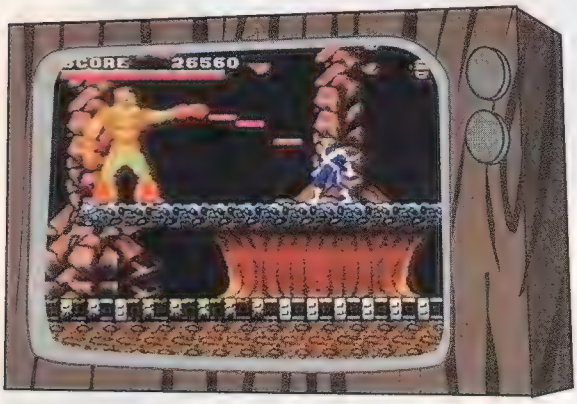
that will feature similar and equally impressive graphic effects. *Disney's Aladdin* is an awesome game featuring breathtaking graphics, challenging game play, and music from the movie. Gamers of all ages will find this cartridge stimulating.

Meanwhile, at the arcades, some of the hottest coin-op games are *NBA Jam*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Virtua Racing*, *Lethal Enforcers*, and *Title Fight*, all of which are either available, or are being adapted for the popular home gaming systems. Of course, the coin-op editions of *Street Fighter II* and *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition* continue to be extremely popular at the arcades.

Game Reviews

Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge
Sega Genesis & Super NES
Acclaim Entertainment (Flying Edge/LJN)/1 Player

Several of Marvel Comics' most popular superheros have teamed up in an exciting video game adventure. In *Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge*, Spider-Man and his mutant superhero friends need your help to escape from Arcade's diabolical amusement park. Arcade has designed this park to challenge Spider-Man and each of the X-Men's unique powers. To be successful, Spider-Man must first locate Wolverine, Cyclops, Gambit, and Storm, who have mysteriously disappeared. Once Spider-Man travels through a maze of corridors and tunnels and deactivates the electronic surveillance devices which protect the area from intruders, he will discover a secret entrance to Arcade's hideout, where the X-Men are being held. At this early stage in the game, Spider-Man must use his Spider-Sense to locate the active electronic eyes and destroy them with his web.



Get 'im, Cyclops!

Once Spidey locates his pals, the adventure really begins. Using a divide and conquer strategy to defeat his foes, Arcade has devised two unique challenges each for Spider-Man, Storm, Cyclops, Gambit, and Wolverine. To survive these deadly tests, each character—whom you control—must use his or her special powers and strengths. Arcade is a rather deranged individual who has a fondness for causing pain and watching people suffer. After spending the early part of his evil career as a murderer, he has now devoted his time and money toward creating the ultimate carnival of death.

By now, you will have discovered that Spider-Man is capable of walking, crouching, jumping, climbing, and slinging short webs (for use as a weapon) and long webs (from which to swing). When his Spider-Sense is activated, a white arrow will appear in the upper-right corner of the game screen, indicating which direction to travel.

In order to defeat Arcade, all five characters must survive their tests. As the gamer, you can choose the order in which the heroes will be tested; however, each superhero must survive their first challenge before proceeding to the second. At the start of this adventure, you have a total of four lives. Additional bonus lives are available in each stage of the game, but can be extremely difficult to obtain.

Each stage offers an assortment of power-ups and special weapons that can be located and obtained by Spider-Man or the X-Men charcter whom you are controlling. As your adventure progresses, you'll encounter Apocalypse, Black Queen, Carnage, the Genoshan Magistrates, Juggernaut, Master Mold, N'Astirh, Rhino, the Sentinels, and Shocker, not to mention dozens of Arcade's henchmen.

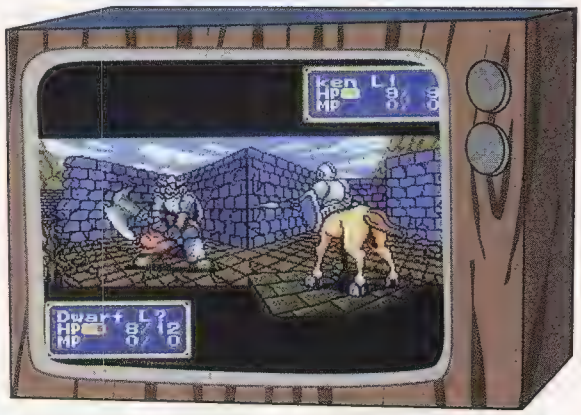
Cyclops is faced with an underground roller coaster ride on an electrified mine cart; touching the rails or hitting a landmine means instant death. For Storm, Arcade has created an underwater adventure which limits her flying abilities; while she deals with the water, metallic squids, sea mines, and other evil sea creatures will be on the offensive. Gambit's adventure places him on a chessboard on which the pieces have come to life. Wolverine will be up against an army of evil circus clowns, some of whom are armed with acid-filled custard pies; he must also contend with bayonet-carrying toy soldiers and machine gun-firing Jacks-in-boxes. As for Spider-Man, Arcade has chosen a construction site as the locale where Spidey will meet his doom.

Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge is a fast-action game that requires strategy as well as quick reflexes. As you move from one Marvel superhero to another, it is vital to become quickly acquainted with each character's strengths and weaknesses before you begin to lose massive amounts of energy—and, eventually, the game.

From a graphics standpoint, the main characters are easily controlled, and move quickly around the game screen. The majority of the background graphics have a comic book-like quality, although the graphics in Sega's *X-Men* are slightly superior. Since each character is faced with completely different challenges, the game play changes dramatically with every level of this rather difficult game.

Shining Force
Sega Genesis
Sega of America/1 Player

If you enjoy fantasy-adventure role playing games you'll want to check out *Shining Force*. This 12-meg cart with a battery back-up feature (it stores up to three games) is Sega's biggest role-playing adventure yet. You can control up to 10 different characters simultaneously, as you increase their skill,



Sega's *Shining Force*

strength, and abilities through combat and exploration. This cartridge takes you through eight main stages, plus numerous sub-quests which make each game a new and unique experience. As you explore each area, you will be joined by additional warriors, each of whom will have a special ability that can help you on your quest.

Shining Force takes place on the continent of Rune, the inhabitants of which have enjoyed a peaceful existence for over fifty generations. But all good things must come to an end, and the army of invaders which is crossing the borders, and the long-sleeping dragon who is about to wake up, seem to indicate that the end is near.

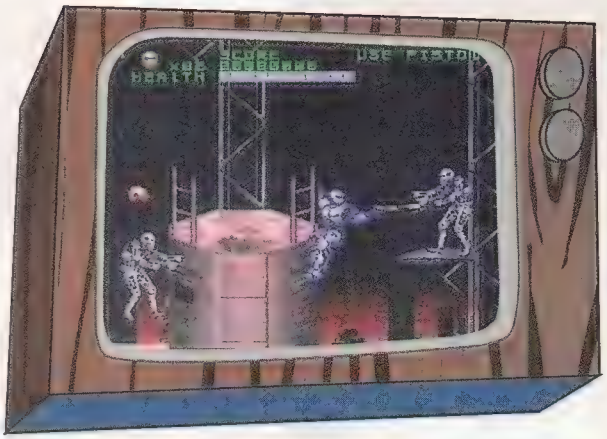
As the leader of the Shining Force, you and your small group of warriors must restore peace and tranquillity to Rune. *Shining Force* requires that combat strategy be devised and implemented throughout the adventure. In between battles, you'll find yourself exploring towns and villages, discovering vital pieces of information, and collecting or buying useful tools and weapons. In addition to weapons and items, you can also use magic spells during battles.

Your character is a human who has been trained as a swordsman. A well-rounded fighter, you can execute the Egress spell, which will magically transport you away from danger and return you to the last town or village you visited. There are over 14 characters who can join your Shining Force team, each of whom has the ability to use over a dozen different weapons and an assortment of magic spells. Keep in mind, however, that some characters use certain items, weapons, and spells better than others. To maintain the strength of your entire team, keep everyone together, and don't let any stray characters become surrounded by enemies. Use other members of your group to ensure the safety of weak characters, and of yourself; after all, you are the leader of the Shining Force.

While visiting each village or town, it is vital to locate the Priest, who can assist you in a multitude of ways. A Priest can cure injured (or dead) warriors, as well as promote them, and he can also save game data. In exchange for these services, the Priest requires a financial donation.

Members of Runefaust's dark army are everywhere, which means that you must always be prepared to fight. Depending on the location and strength of your opponent(s), you must determine the best method to defeat whomever awaits you. As in most RPGs (role-playing games), the damage you inflict upon an opponent is measured in Hit Points.

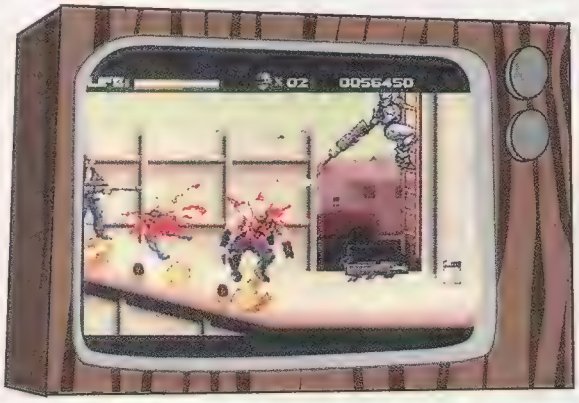
In terms of game play, interaction between characters is based on text-based dialog boxes which appear on the game screen. All commands are executed by selecting graphic icons. Except for combat situations, most of the action is seen from an overhead perspective. The gamer's interaction with the various icons and menus is extremely straightforward, but you can expect countless hours of challenge from this game.



Metal on metal: *Robocop Versus Terminator.*

RoboCop Versus Terminator
Super NES & Sega Genesis
Virgin Games/1 Player

Based on the million-book-selling Dark Horse series written by Frank Miller and illustrated by Walt Simonson, *RoboCop Versus Terminator* is a 16-meg video game experience featuring octane-fueled mayhem that will propel you through ten levels as you explore four perilous worlds.



Blood and guts action!

As RoboCop, the half-man, half-robot cyborg who was once a cop named Alex Murphy, you must travel across time into a bloody future ruled by the mechanical forces of Skynet. Delta City, the ED-209 law enforcement robots, and OCP itself have been taken over by legions of Terminators and Terminator Endoskeletons. From the moment your adventure begins, you're faced with dozens of enemy robots and characters whom you must blast away using RoboCop's arsenal of grenade launchers, plasma rifles, flame throwers, Hunter Killers, and other deadly weapons.

While fighting to free the world from ruthless cyborgs, you'll hear an original soundtrack, and feel a realism that is enhanced by the sound effects and the detailed background graphics. The fighting in this futuristic shoot-'em-up game is nonstop: it requires you to fire at and destroy anything on the screen that moves. The ability to creatively use your weapons—and not just score a direct hit—proves to be a major asset when attempting to blast away the enemies.

RoboCop Versus Terminator is an excellent adaptation of the comic book series which should not be confused with the video game adaptations of the motion picture *RoboCop 3*, or with the RoboCop games being developed in conjunction with the *RoboCop* syndicated television series that premieres in January '94. The Super NES and Genesis versions of this game offer very similar game play, and feature rather dark and mysterious graphic backgrounds. Like the comic book, both versions of the game contain violent themes which are depicted graphically. ☆

Jason R. Rich is the author of several video game-related books, including An Official Player's Guide to Sonic the Hedgehog, Conquering Super NES Games, *and* The Sega CD Sourcebook, *all published by Compute Books and available at bookstores everywhere. He is also a regular contributor to numerous gaming magazines.*

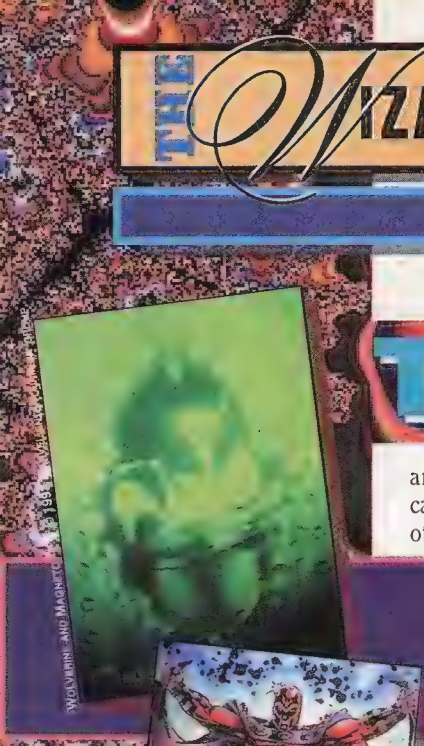
THE WIZARD OF CARDS

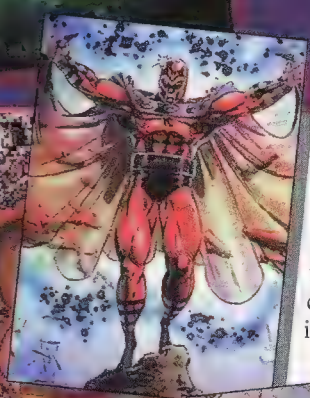
BY STEPHEN SHAMUS

FLEER ULTRA RELEASES X-MEN CARD SET

The biggest news of the month comes as no surprise to most of us: Fleer will be producing its first Marvel cards in January 1994. The very first Fleer Marvel Universe series will be an Ultra set—Fleer's premium line of cards—and will feature the X-Men. The only other information available right now is that it will be a 150-card set featuring work by today's top artists.

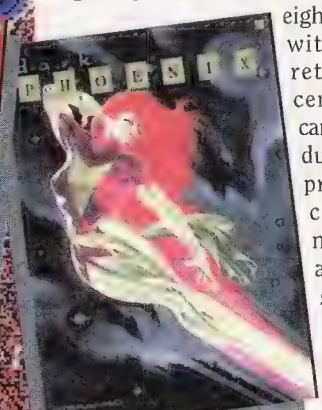
Speaking of X-Men cards, SkyBox will be releasing an X-Men Series 2 tin set in November. The set contains all the cards from the regular set as well as the nine special foil cards and the special 3-D Wolverine hologram. Only 17,500 tins are being produced, and each one will be individually numbered. As with all the SkyBox tin sets, these cards make great gifts and are fine collector's items.





ABOVE: SKY BOX'S X-MEN SERIES II SET WILL BE RE-RELEASED AS A LIMITED EDITION TIN SET, AND A 100-CARD *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* SET, ALSO FROM SKYBOX, IS ON THE WAY.

BELOW: TWO EXAMPLES OF THE SNAZZY X-MEN CARDS PRODUCED BY CHARACTER TIME.



In November, SkyBox is releasing a 100-card *Deep Space Nine* set. The chase cards include five foreign language cards, four Spectra Etch cards, and one limited bonus gold Spectra Collection card. There will be eight cards in a pack, with a suggested retail price of 99 cents a pack. The cards are being produced with a new process that uses computer technology to project all of the space scenes.

Also out right about now are the *Demolition Man* trading cards, based on the new Sly Stallone film, in which he plays a cop tracking down a serial killer in the year 2032. The 100-card series includes a special 10-card subset highlighting cars of the future in the form of GM automobiles which were manufactured especially for the movie. Four foil-enhanced cards will be randomly inserted in the packs. The cards are available in eight-card packs which carry a suggested retail price of 99 cents.

Two other movie sets are on their way from SkyBox: *Nightmare Before Christmas* and *The Three Musketeers*. *Nightmare Before Christmas* is a Tim Burton animated film which combines fantasy and horror and takes a really offbeat look at Christmas; in other words, it's everything you'd expect from a Tim Burton film. The set will have 99 cards, eight to a pack. Look out for both the movie and card set in December.

The second set, *The Three Musketeers*, will spotlight a Disney film starring Kiefer Sutherland, Charlie Sheen, and Tim Curry (from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*). The movie will be released around Thanksgiving, and the cards will follow about two weeks later, with a suggested retail price of 99 cents for eight cards.

The River Group is releasing two new sets spotlighting Jim Shooter's Defiant Universe. The first, entitled *Dark Dominion* #0, is the second in a line of zero-issue trading cards from River Group. The 150-card set features three different levels of chase cards. The first level includes eight cards which depict scenes from Earth. Special binders will be available, along with some exclusive goodies: the ninth chase card from the first level, and a special lens. When level one cards are viewed through the lens, the real universe transforms into the Dark Dominion (ooo...scary). The level two chase cards, three in all, feature new characters from upcoming Defiant titles. The special level three card in this set is an original piece of art by Steve Ditko. This set is available right now.

The second series on its way from the River Group is the *Ruthless Stars of Splatterball*. Splatterball is a sport in which losers are put to death. This 30-card set is only available in tin set form and features the two best teams from this killer sport. The set will be out in mid-November and will carry a suggested retail price of $10.

Topps has changed its Deathmate plans slightly: since the *Deathmate* books were late in coming out, the cards have also been delayed. They're being released some time in early November, hopefully coinciding with the release of the books. The Upper Deck cards came out pretty much on schedule, so we'll have to see if either of these events affect sales.

Topps has more news on *The Maxx* trading card series. There will be six chase cards in the set, four cards of which are available in the wax packs, one of which is available only as a sendaway, and one of which is available only in the issue that you're holding in your hands right now. This exclusive chase card doesn't appear anywhere else. We hope you think it's as cool as we do.

The set everyone has been hearing so much about, *The Creators Universe*, has been finished and will be hitting the stores in late November. The 100-card set contains all-new original characters from all your favorite artists. Production is limited to 10,000 numbered cases, and there are tons of great inserts: to wit, 30,000 randomly-inserted signed cards with 22-carat gold foil stamping. (Three hundred duplicates of each card in the set have been signed.)

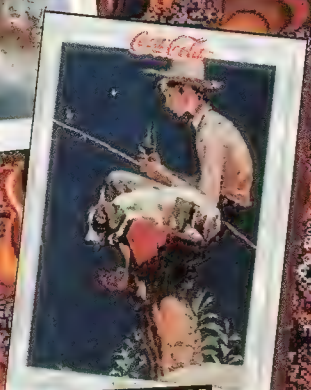
The *Evil Ernie* trading cards are coming your way in November. The 100-card set features Evil Ernie and his Horrorverse pals, with guest artists including Joe Quesada. The bonus cards in the set are chromium character cards, and Steven Hughes and Brian Pulido will co-autograph 1,500 cards.

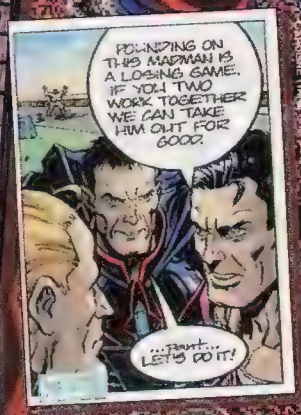
For the Coca-Cola collectors out there, there's a new set on the way which takes you through the history of the Coca-Cola company and its various advertising campaigns. There are randomly-inserted coupons, 1,000 in all, which can be redeemed for a Gold Card, depicting either Honus Wagner or the Coca-Cola Santa, each of which contains 1 gram of 24 kt. gold.

Majestic's *Legacy* #0 cards recently hit the streets. The #0 means that the set is a comic book in card form. This 150-card set has two nine-card chase sets: DynaEtch character cards, and previews of the *S.T.A.T.* comicard series. The *S.T.A.T.* #0 card set has probably just hit the stores as well; it contains 150 cards and has a nine-card subset featuring DynaEtch cards of its characters.

For some time now, a watch company called Character Time has been producing comic book character watches. The great thing about these watches is that the boxes contain trading cards. The first set of cards features X-Men: Cyclops, Wolverine, Cable, Dark Phoenix, and Professor Xavier. There are only 5,000 watches, which makes the cards very limited items.

In the next few months there are going to be some really incredible sets coming out, and as the competition gets stiffer, the cards keep getting better. Some of the things we'll be covering in 1994 include Simpsons cards based on the new Bongo comic book; an all-inclusive DC Comics cards set (for the first time in a long time, Batman and his cast of characters will appear); Malibu's Ultraverse Series 2 cards; and a Black Ball comics card set featuring the talents of Bisley, Giffen, and Kevin O'Neil, all from SkyBox. We can also look forward to more Valiant sets from Pyramid, as well as some new Marvel sets from Fleer. All this wonderful stuff will be covered in the next couple of months, so keep readin'.





ABOVE: THE COCA-COLA SET FROM COLLECTA-CARD AND SKYBOX'S *DEMOLITION MAN* CARD SERIES. (WITH THAT GUT, I HOPE IT'S DIET COKE THAT SANTA'S CHUGGING.)

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Eternal Warrior #4

Artist: ***Yvel Guichet***
Writer: ***Kevin VanHook***
Publisher: ***Valiant***
Release date: ***November 1992***

"Somewhere in the world a baby will be born with two different colored eyes. And in a few years, without knowing why, it will start to hate...then it will remember. And there will be another time." That's Mr. Gilad Abrams talking about Caldone, better known to some of you comic fans as the Eternal Enemy. Though he may not be quite as big as, say, Master Darque or Erica Pierce, he is a significant Valiant character. Keeping that in mind, and with the knowledge that Valiant back issues are, well, Valiant back issues (translation: *muy caliente*!), you have another hot sleeper book. The only catch here, though, is the fact that this book has already experienced upward movement in the price guide. Why? Well, this is also the second appearance of Bloodshot (!), and even though it's selling for about twenty clams, it is still definitely underrated. Think about it: the second appearance of Bloodshot (!!) and the first appearance of the Eternal Enemy, all for about $20! Wotta steal. Throw in the fact that it's one awesome kick-butt story, and the package is complete.

© 1985 DC Comics

Swamp Thing #37 (second series)

Artists: ***Rick Veitch & John Totleben***
Writer: ***Alan Moore***
Publisher: ***DC Comics***
Release Date: ***June 1985***

Wow—first *Eternal Warrior*, now *Swamp Thing*. This month's Comic Watch is definitely one of the few occasions when the two books being profiled were not only hot sleepers but also awesome reads, to boot. For those of you who may not know this, Alan Moore, the guy who writes Image's *1963* series and who also wrote the somewhat well-received *Watchmen*, once had a pretty long tenure as the writer of DC's *Swamp Thing* (from issue #20 to #64). During the course of these fantastically written stories, which are pretty darn scary at times, Moore not only completely redefined the Swamp Thing by making him an Earth elemental, but also introduced John Constantine into DC continuity. For those of you unfamiliar with Mr. Constantine, he's a major DC character who stars in his own monthly series, *Hellblazer* (awesome book! cool Fabry covers! read it!), and he's amassed a pretty sizable fan following. Keeping that in mind, how long can it be before fans wake up and realize that his first appearance is something that's very much worth owning? ☆

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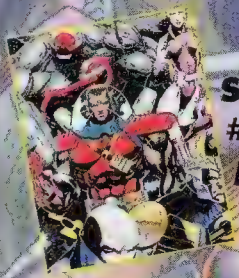

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PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS SHIPPING IN NOVEMBER!

Ninjak #1

Artists: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti
Writer: Mark Moretti
Release Date: November
Cover Price: $3.50

For the second year in a row, Valiant is referring to November as Valiant Comics month, and with good reason. In November, the Harbinger Foundation will resurrect itself (in *New Harbingers* #26); Ivar the Timewalker will drop in on the year 4002 (in *Magnus* #33); the Armorines make their debut (in a zero-numbered issue appearing in *X-O* #25); and *Ninjak* #1, the most eagerly awaited Valiant comic since *Bloodshot* #1, is shipped to retailers. The man behind the Ninjak persona is Colin King, a wealthy Englishman who provides a sort of globe-trotting vigilante service for a man by the name of the Weaponeer. Mr. King is cut from the same cloth as James Bond; he's a ladies man who's as comfortable in the beaudoir as he is in battle. In *Ninjak* #1, we find our hero caught up in a war between his employer and the evil Dr. Silk (Dr. Silk, Dr. Mirage, Dr. Eclipse. Boy, Valiant sure hands out their degrees rather liberally). Will our boy be able to accomplish the duties for which he's handsomely paid without ending up with his butt in the graveyard? His motto, "I always take care of things," indicates that there's a little more to Ninjak than just a snappy set of duds and some neat swords. This blockbuster #1 issue will come equipped with a wraparound chromium cover by Joe "Grand Master Q" Quesada and Jimmy "Inky Chillin'" Palmiotti, not unlike the spectacular cover the two created for the now-legendary *X-O Manowar* #0.

NINJAK ™ & © 1993 VALIANT COMMUNICATIONS

Simpsons Comics #1

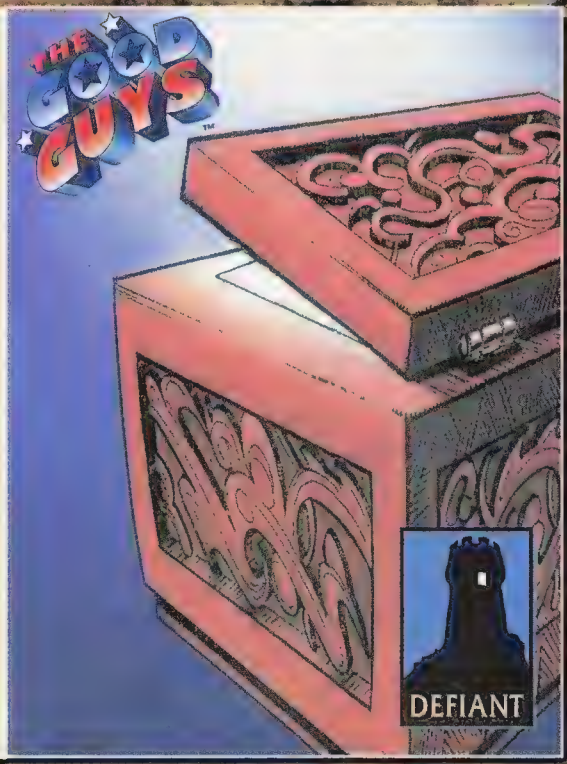
Artists: Bill Morrison and Steve Vance
Writers: Steve & Cindy Vance
Release Date: November
Cover Price: $2.25

Bongo Comics, the imprint created by Matt Groening and company which produces a line of comics featuring his hilarious Simpsons characters, kicks into high gear this month with the release of their first two titles, *Simpsons Comics* and *Itchy & Scratchy Comics*. *Simpsons Comics* #1 features two knee-slapping tales in flip-book form. The first is "The Amazing Colossal Homer," a story so silly that it just has to be seen to be believed. If you thought Homer was a boob before, imagine how idiotic (and dangerous) he'll be when his pea-sized brain is given charge of a body the size of a *T. rex*! Will Springfield's donut-munching finest be able to save its citizens from this horrible monstrosity? The cover to this milestone issue (no, this isn't a Milestone comic; those are the guys over at DC) is a parody of one of the most recognizable covers ever, *Fantastic Four* #1, with the colossal Homer Simpson taking the place of the giant Mole Man monster. No gimmick cover to be found here, gang, just pure comic fun. When you flip this comic over, you lucky fans will get to read *Bart Simpson's Creepy Crawly Tales*, guaranteed either to scare the bejeezus out of you, or to make you lose your lunch. Either way, this comic promises to be a hoot!

Good Guys #1

Artist: Grey
Writer: Jan Childress
Release Date: November
Cover Price: $3.50

The Defiant train keeps chugging along in November with the release of their third ongoing title, *The Good Guys*. This is the story of two young brothers who are going to the comic store. Before they get there, however, the older boy must collect money from his paper route. They come to a spooky house; the front door swings open. Inside is an old lady who gives the two boys a mysterious box, asks them to dispose of it for her, and pays them $20. Instead of getting rid of the box immediately, they go to the comic store and spend the twenty bucks on the latest hot book. In the meantime, the box—a wish bomb—detonates, granting the wish of anyone within a two mile radius. The Good Guys consist of the seven people whose wishes to be superheroes were granted. Why haven't we named any of the characters in the book? Because they will be cast through the joint *Wizard*/Defiant contest, in which winners will become actual characters in the storyline, in addition to collecting some excellent prizes. Artist Grey began drawing the book without faces, and will add them in as the winners are picked. Pretty cool, huh?



X-O Manowar #25/Armorines #0

Artists: Paris Karounos/ Jim Calafiore
Writer: Jorge González
Release Date: November
Cover Price: $3.50

More fun stuff brought to you from those fine folks at the big "V." This time it's in the form of a special insert comic entitled *Armorines* #0. The Armorines are a special task force which has been assembled by the Special Services division of the Pentagon. The U.S. Government is extremely distressed over the fact that the X-O Manowar armor is not in their possession, and, as a contingency in case the armor falls into the wrong people's hands—or if Aric or Randy decides to misuse it—they assemble the Armorines. "Who?" you ask. "The Armorines, by golly," we answer. They're a group of men outfitted in suits of armor using the latest in Government-culled technology—knowledge drawn from the Manowar armor combined with good ol' American know-how. Each Armorine suit is manned by one person, with another person helping to control it from a base (kinda like how Softcore helps out the members of H.A.R.D. Corps). The story in *X-O Manowar* #25 directly follows the events depicted in *Armorines* #0, meaning that all you fans out there should read the comic-within-the-comic first.

Nova #1

Artist: Chris Marrinan
Writer: Fabian Nicieza
Release Date: November 9th
Cover Price: $2.95

Nova is back for his second run in his own comic. For those of you who don't know, *Nova* was published by Marvel from 1976 until 1979, and ran for 25 issues. It was actually a pretty cool series; you might want to check it out. After Nova's trials in *New Warriors* #40-42, the Xandar Starcorps have increased Nova's power and assigned him to be their guardian of Earth. Who are the Xandar Starcorps, you ask? They are a race of aliens who, having seen their own planet destroyed twice—twice?—have vowed to protect the galaxy from any further destruction; they have chosen Nova to be part of their "police" force. In the previous Nova series, he had the misfortune of having some of his powers stripped away, thus constantly keeping him on the edge. Now the character is edgy because of his recent power-boost. In order to test his mettle, this first issue contains a special (and oh-so-powerful) guest villain, so it appears we'll get to see how powerful our boy is right from the get-go. The tag line for this series says it all: "He can fly to the moon, but he can't afford a subway token. You'd have an attitude too!"

MORE PICKS

The following pages compile the grooviest titles shipping for the month of November. Also listed are books carrying the *Wizard* recommended reading RCA sign—comics that have the most potential to deliver a solid, well-written story, and ones that shouldn't be overlooked on the comic book rack.

Action Comics #695

DC COMICS In this gimmick-covered collector's edition—don't fret, there's a newsstand version, too—Lobo wants to kill Superman...again! (And you were wondering why this book needed a special cover...) Also, the lab rats of Nimh—er, Project Cadmus—unleash Cauldron, a powerful and mysterious new villain who's set to trounce Metropolis. The cover on this baby has a multi-level foil-embossed enhancement. By Roger Stern, Jackson Guice, and Denis Rodier. **$2.50**

RCA Aquaman: Time & Tide #2 (of 4)

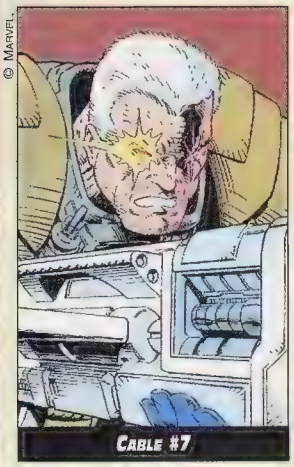
DC COMICS The retelling of Aquaman's origin continues! How would you feel if your people stranded you on a underwater reef to die, and you were, instead, raised by dolphins? Wouldja chop up those people, pack them into tuna cans, and feed 'em to your dolphins? Maybe, but Aquaman channels his angst in a more positive way by concentrating on survival. In fact, he proves he's a nice guy by helping out the dolphins in their war against the sharks. (It's football versus hockey—look out!) By Peter David, Kirk Jarvinen, and Brad Vancata. **$1.50**

Avengers West Coast #102

MARVEL It's the last issue of *AWC*... Hey! Save your cheering until after you finish reading this, you ingrates! Anyway, its the A.W.C's final issue and they're going out with a bang by locking horns with the east coast Avengers. (In other words, kiss the west coasters goodbye.) Will we ever see our team again? 'Course, silly, they'll be moving to a new monthly title, *Force Works*, in December. By Andy Lanning and Dan Abnett, Dave Ross, and Tim Dzon. **$1.25**

Batman #503

DC COMICS "Knightquest: The Crusade" continues. A trail of carnage emerges after Batman unearths a scheme to poison all of Gotham City. Since all the clues lead to Catwoman, you can bet your tail that something violent is gonna happen! Sigh... Just when you thought they were getting along... This story continues in *Catwoman* #6, so you might want to check that one out too. By Doug Moench and Mike Manley. **$1.50**



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Cable #7

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Daredevil: Man Without Fear #4

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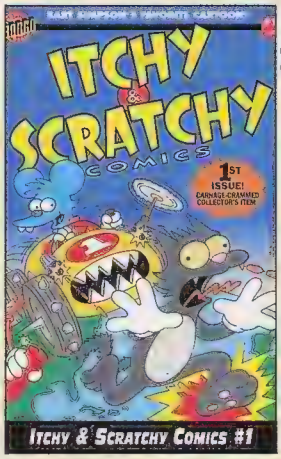
Gambit #2



© Bongo.

Itchy & Scratchy Comics #1

Batman & Judge Dredd: Vendetta in Gotham

DC & FLEETWAY/QUALITY After the enormously successful first Bat/Dredd team-up, those wacky crimefighters are at it again in this Prestige Format book! Alan Grant and John Wagner, who are no strangers to either character, are returning to script this sequel, while Cam Kennedy (of *Star Wars: Dark Empire* fame) will supply the art. This time, Judge Dredd comes to Gotham determined to settle his vendetta with Batman. At the same time, the Ventriloquist (who recently bit the dust in the "Knightfall" story) kicks off a new string of mass murders. **$4.95**

Cable #7

MARVEL Domino is searching for Cable, who may or may not be under the control of Stryfe. Meanwhile, Tyler demands to know the truth about her father. By Fabian Nicieza and Dwayne Turner. **$2.00**

RCA The Children's Crusade #2

VERTIGO/DC After crossing over through all of the Vertigo annuals, *The Children's Crusade* comes to its jarring conclusion. The plans of the weird children of Free Country come to fruition, and Free Country's die is cast–with severe consequences! All of the Vertigo kids will evolve during this experience, and one will not be coming home! Featuring a painted cover by John Totleben, this book is co-written by Gaiman and Vertigo alums Alisa Kwitney and Jamie Delano, and is drawn by Danish sensation Peter Snejbjerg. Editor Stuart Moore says, "This final bookend is true to Neil's vision of the overall story." For mature readers. **$3.95**

Daredevil #324

MARVEL "Fall From Grace," Part 5 (of 6). In this issue, DD, his doppelganger, and Morbius run full steam towards the virus that threatens Manhattan. Plus, the identity of the sai-wielding villain is revealed. (Our money's on Raphael or Elektra.) By Dan Chichester and Scott McDaniel. **$1.25**

WIZARD Contest 28

Welcome to the Malibu Comics Genesis™ Contest! We have some incredible prizes for you! In Fact, the top prizes this month are original artwork from the Malibu Genesis universe. We have an *Ex-Mutants*™ cover by Darick (*New Warriors, The Solution*) Robertson, a cover of *The Ferret*™ by Dean Zachery, and a cover to the *Dinosaurs For Hire*™ by Leonard Kirk. So pull out your back issues of *Protectors*™, *Dinosaurs For Hire*™, and *Ex-Mutants*™ and answer these four questions:

Questions:

1. **The cover of *Dinosaurs For Hire* #6 parodies what popular summer movie?**
2. **Name the cyborg that brought the *Ex-Mutants* back to their human form.**
3. **The Genesis Universe has two not-so-accurate archer's, name them.**
4. **President O'Brien was once a young crime-fighter himself, what name did criminals know him by?**

Grand Prize-(2)

A cover by Darick Robertson and a Genesis #0 Gold.

First Prize-(4)

A Dean Zachery *The Ferret* Cover or a Leonard Kirk *Dinosaurs For Hire cover.*

Second Prize-(45)

Original interior art from The Ferret or *Dinosaurs For Hire*.

Third Prize-(25)

Genesis #0 Gold.

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No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc. and their immediate families. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name of the store where you purchase your comics on a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry individually to CONTEST 28 1/2 "GENESIS ART GIVEAWAY" PO Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winner and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 1, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 14, 1994 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994 send a self addressed stamped envelope to "GENESIS ART GIVEAWAY" PO Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

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MORE PICKS

DAREDEVIL: MAN WITHOUT FEAR #4 (OF 5)

MARVEL Matt Murdock discovers the true slime of New York City after he confronts the Kingpin, and the supposed Man Without Fear suffers from a heavy dose of fright. By Frank Miller, John Romita Jr., and Al Williamson, this well-crafted penultimate issue sets up next issue's dramatic, sensational conclusion. It's Daredevil like you've never seen him before, handled by the best in the business! **$2.95**

DETECTIVE COMICS #670

DC COMICS "Knightquest: The Crusade." The spotlight shines on Officer Ren Montoya as she is confronted with a Batman more intense than the one she knew before. Will Azrael/Bats kick the crap out of her, too? Featuring a stunning cover by Kelley Jones, this one is by Chuck Dixon, Barry Kitson, and Scott Hanna. **$1.50**

GAMBIT #2 (OF 4)

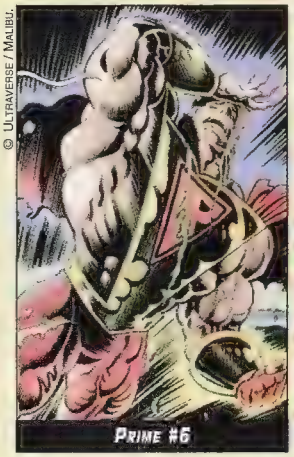
MARVEL The true fate of Bella Donna is revealed, and Gambit must come to grips with the shocking revelation. (And if she is dead, it will be pretty shocking—this being a Marvel book and all.) Also starring Rogue, who helps Gambit hold off the horde of evil Assassins. By Howard Mackie, Lee Weeks, and Klaus Janson. **$2.00**

GREEN LANTERN #49

DC COMICS Effective as of this issue, the Green Lanterns become the most powerful people in the DC Universe. How, you ask? Well, the winning group of warring Guardians' first act of supremacy is to remove the 24-hour time limit on the rings' power as well as their yellow impurity. Their second act is to appoint Sinestro as the GLC's new leader! (And you can bet Hal Jordan is not happy it!) By Jones, Haynes, and Tanghal. **$1.50**

IRON MAN #300 (COLLECTOR'S EDITION)

MARVEL Hey, guess what? Tony Stark gets what seems like his 300th suit of armor in this 64-page issue, as he faces the new and improved Ultimo. And he's not in some remote-controlled suit, either. But will the new armor and some elbow grease be enough to stop Ultimo? Probably not, so that's why Tony brings in some friends and puts them into all the Iron Man armored suits from the past. Guest-starring War Machine. By Len Kaminski, Kevin Hopgood, and Steve Mitchell. **$3.95**



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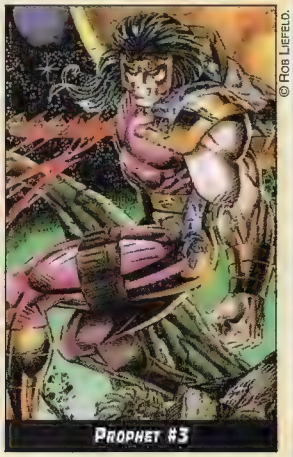
PRIME #6



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PROPHET #3

ITCHY & SCRATCHY COMICS #1

BONGO COMICS From *The Simpsons* television show comes the most violent cat-and-mouse pair ever—Itchy and Scratchy. In this story, Scratchy is down and out after spending all of his royalty bucks from *The Itchy & Scratchy Show*. He tries to regain his fortune by entering a million-dollar race around the world. But once Itchy shows up at the starting line, you can expect to see plenty of fireworks (and other explosives). By Matt Groening, Steve Vance, and B. Morrison. **$2.25**

JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: FAITH #2 (OF 4)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE In this issue, the Next Men go underground and find that people are living in the subways of New York City. It is here that Jack has a spiritual encounter which will change his life forever! (Well, as "forever" as comic books get, anyway.) Meanwhile, up in civilization, the Dollar Comics characters keep popping up—and what is the connection between that and Sandy's bizarre transformation? Plus, Dollar publisher Ben Horowitz has some bold things to say about the industry. All this by John Byrne with Matt Webb! For mature readers. **$2.50**

MARVELS #1 (OF 4)

MARVEL Ever wanted to re-live those early Marvel adventures from the Lee/Kirby/Ditko days? Well, now you can. In this fully painted limited series, see through the eyes of a reporter what the world would really be like if it had Marvel heroes in it. This series is so special that each issue has an acetate cover which, when pulled back, reveals the full splendor of the illustration, uncluttered by logos and such. By Kurt Busiek and Alex Ross. Marvel editor Marc McLauren says of the project, "It really does fulfill its promise to make you feel like you live in the Marvel Universe. I think it's going to rock a lot of people and surprise them." Advance word on this series is so great, McLaurin says, there are plans for a sequel. **$4.95**

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JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: FAITH #2

© MARVEL.

MARVELS #1

MORE PICKS

© Marvel.
Punisher War Journal #61

© Jim Valentino.
Shadowhawk III #1

The New Harbingers #26

VALIANT From the ashes of the last issue, a new Harbinger Foundation is born! Can this new group of young heroes overcome their differences and rivalries long enough to survive their first big test? (Kinda sounds like *D.P. 7* all over again...) This issue is an all-new beginning for a small corner of the Valiant Universe, so new readers are invited to hop on board. By Maurice Fontenot, Sean Chen, Andrew Wendel, and Maria Beccari. **$2.50**

New Warriors #43

MARVEL Marvel Boy is back! But after a year in a maximum security prison, even he realizes that it's time to change that dumb name of his. So in this issue, Marvel Boy becomes Justice and gets a new costume. By the stellar team of Fabian Nicieza, Darick Robertson, and Larry Mahlstedt. Nicieza says of the issue, "Marvel Boy doesn't know if he can work with the New Warriors any more in order to do what he has to do to see that his vision of justice is served. He gets [an offer] from another group and must decide which one to join. I can't say who, but there will be a New Warriors/X-Force team-up soon." Hmmm, wonder who that other group could be...? **$1.25**

Prime #6

ULTRAVERSE/MALIBU Prime meets President Bill Clinton and the First Family! It's Prime's first encounter with Chelsea Clinton, who also happens to be 13 years old. Meanwhile, could strange power readings originating from the moon be the cause of all the ultrahumans running around? Prime decides to go there and investigate for himself. (Let's hope his skin doesn't melt on that trip.) By Gerard Jones, Len Strazewski, and Norm Breyfogle. And speaking of Chelsea, co-writer Strazewski says, "Gerard Jones and I have big plans for Chelsea. She's a superhero in her own right. She takes the heat and the criticism that a superhero has to take and we think she's doing a heck of a job of it." **$1.95**

Prophet #3

IMAGE Now that she's in the 20th Century, Judas prepares to avenge herself on Prophet. (Wonder if she's got 30 pieces of silver for the deed...) Plus, Bloodstrike's battle with Prophet concludes—and the ending might shock you. (Ah, the heck with it—we all know what's gonna happen. Cabbot'll give the "just stay out of our way, Prophet..." line.) By Rob Liefeld and Dan Panosian. **$1.95**

Punisher War Journal #61

MARVEL "Suicide Run," #1 (of 10). The sweeping changes in store for the Punisher start here! When a confederacy gathers to off the Punisher, our friendly neighborhood vigilante catches wind of it and decides to hunt down his enemies—and he's showing absolutely no mercy. This issue is 48 pages and has a multi-level foil-embossed cover by Michael Golden! Interior by Chuck Dixon and Gary Kwapisz. **$2.95**

The Second Life of Dr. Mirage

VALIANT Supernatural murders are plaguing a traveling rodeo, and this looks like a job for the Mirages. Also, there's a mysterious cult lurking in the shadows... What could they want from our favorite paranormal investigators? Brought to you by Bob Layton, Bernard Chang, and Ken Branch, the only guys who can make a traveling rodeo seem like a cool setting for an adventure. **$2.50**

Shadowhawk III #1

IMAGE If you think you know all you need to know about Shadowhawk... forget it, you don't know the half of it. Here's the start of the complete story behind the origin of the deadly vigilante. By Jim Valentino and Chance Wolf. **$2.50**

Sin City: A Dame to Kill For #1 (of 6)

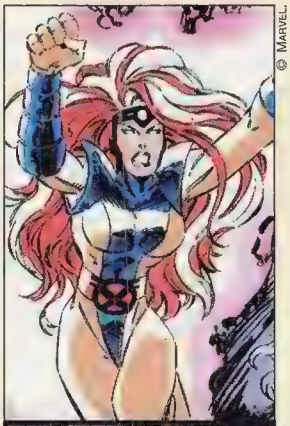
LEGEND/DARK HORSE Comic book "legend" and explorer Frank Miller returns to his greatest crime story saga—*Sin City*, the series that was the winner of the National Cartoonists' Award for Best Comic Book of 1992! This first issue will introduce us to Dwight, a photographer who specializes in hard-to-get shots. Unfortunately for him, they're incriminating shots—shots which lead to messy, expensive divorces. Needless to say, Dwight is trying to forget the past, and was doing a pretty good job of it... until the phone rang. Sound ominous to you or what? This story takes place

© Frank Miller.
Sin City: A Dame to Kill For #1

© Ultraverse / Malibu.
Solitaire #1

MORE PICKS

© DC Comics.
The Spectre #14


© Marvel.
Uncanny X-Men #308

over a longer span of time, overlapping the first Sin City story. Fans of Jim Lee's art in *Deathblow* should check out this series, which inspired Lee. **$2.95**

Solitaire #1 (Collector's Edition)

ULTRAVERSE/MALIBU He protects the "weirdos, the outcasts, and the victims of the world—especially in Los Angeles." (Well, that's where most of 'em are, anyways...) In this premier issue, Solitaire takes on King Pleasure, who kidnaps and murders young runaways. In the process we learn a little bit about Solitaire and his mysterious father. By the team that brought you Marvel's *Wonder Man*—Gerard Jones and Jeff Johnson. Also, each issue comes polybagged with an actual playing card. **$2.50**

Spawn #18

IMAGE Grant Morrison and Greg Capullo's final installment in their run pits Spawn versus the Anti-Spawn, but does the winner of the battle really win? The second half of the story features Al Simmons giving Wanda, his former wife, a special "gift"—a complete flashback of all her past experiences with Al before his death. **$1.95**

The Spectre #14

DC COMICS As the Spectre sits in judgment of humanity, certain forces gather against him. Meanwhile, the Phantom Stranger doesn't like the fact that the Spectre is preparing to judge humanity, but even *he* may not be able to stop the Spectre. (And *that's* saying something about the Spectre's power!) Also, the secret behind Spectre's vigilance might be revelaed by clues from the distant past. If you haven't done so already, check out this truly fantastic series, which is consistently first-rate stuff. By John Ostrander and Joe Phillips. **$1.75**

Starblast #1

MARVEL This bookend issue kicks off the Marvel Universe's next galactic conflict! A group of mysterious beings called the Starblasters push the moon out of orbit (wha...?) in order to distract Earth's heroes from their true mission—to steal the awesome Star Brand! (Move the moon out of orbit! First of all, that would...ah forget it. It's just a comic book.) By Mark Gruenwald, Andy Smith, and Ralph Cabrera, the team that brings you *Quasar*. **$2.00**

Uncanny X-Men #308

MARVEL It took 30 years of continuity (or what passes for it these days), but Scott Summers has finally popped the question to Jean Grey. What's her answer? Well, since Marvel is not keeping anyone in suspense on this one... she says "Okay," or the next-best word of assent. The wedding's in January, and even though we can't really be there, we can read about it. Wheee! By Scott Lobdell and John Romita Jr. (who had a hand in Cyclops' last wedding in *Uncanny X-Men* #175, 10 years ago. Let's see if Cyke sticks to his vows this time). **$1.25**

WildC.A.T.s #6

IMAGE "Killer Instinct," Part 1 (of 4). A tale of love and betrayal begins within the confines of the Image Universe. Misery has returned, and Warblade and Ripclaw will never be the same. Also, with a dominating alliance between the Cabal and Cyberdata, both the C.A.T.s and Cyberforce must unite in order to prevent world domination. By Jim Lee, Brandon Choi, and Scott Williams. **$1.95**

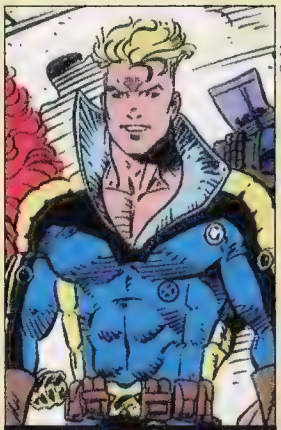
X-Force #30

MARVEL That red-haired, psychopathic disco mogul Arcade is back as Shatterstar and X-Treme are pitted against one another in one of Arcade's sick and twisted games. In the meantime, find out more about Shatterstar's *Mr. Unfriendly* disposition, as the rest of X-Force continue to mourn the loss of their fallen team members. By Fabian Nicieza and Matt Broome. **$1.25**

X-Men #28

MARVEL Sabretooth joins the X-Men?!? Maybe, since Professor X allows him to stay at the X-Mansion. You know, it was bad enough when Marvel made Venom a good guy, but Sabretooth? Geez louise, there are like no good bad guys left at Marvel. (Or is it that there are no bad bad guys left at Marvel? Errgh, anyway...) By that Nicieza guy again, as well as Andy Kubert and Matthew Ryan. **$1.25**

© Aegis Entertainment.
WildC.A.T.s #6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X-Force #30

THIS MONTH'S NUMBER ONES!

COMIC BOOK COLLECTORS place a great deal of importance on #1 issues. Since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed, you have to choose your comics very carefully. Number one issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes very popular. Here we have compiled for you all the #1 issues shipping for November. Happy hunting!

Acme-Toons #1
Fantagraphics $2.95

Arcana Annual #1
DC Comics $3.95

Archie's Xmas Stocking #1
Archie Comics $2.00

Armorines #0
Valiant $3.50

Avengers Strike File #1
Marvel $1.75

Brigand Doom #1
Fleetway/Quality $1.95

Catmandu #1
Antarctic Press $2.75

Death Metal #1
Marvel UK $1.95

Death Wreck #1
Marvel $1.95

Doctor Chaos #1
Triumphant $2.50

Good Guys # 1
Defiant $3.50

Hawkeye #1
Marvel $1.75

Itchy & Scratchy Comics #1
Bongo Comics $2.25

Legacy #1
Majestic $2.25

Marvels #1
Marvel $4.95

New World Order #1 Limited Edition
Blazer Studios $9.95

Ninjak #1
Valiant $3.50

Nova #1
Marvel $2.95

Phantom Force #1
Image $2.50

Prince Vandal #1
Triumphant $2.50

Ripwire #1
Marvel UK $1.95

RoboTech: Invid War Aftermath
Eternity Comics $2.50

Scarlet Witch #1
Marvel $1.75

Showcase '94
DC Comics $1.95

Shadow Cabinet #0
DC Comics $2.50

Shadowhawk III #1
Image $2.50

Simpsons Comics #1
Bongo Comics $2.25

Sin City: A Dame To Kill For #1
Dark Horse $2.95

Solitaire #1
Ultraverse $2.50

Spasm #1
Express $2.95

Spider-Man vs. Dracula #1
Marvel $1.75

Starblast #1
Marvel $2.00

Strangers in Paradise #1
Antarctic Press $2.75

The Strange And Bizarre Origin of Herbert West #1
Millennium $2.95

The Wizard's Tale #1
Eclipse $5.95

Time Warrior/Web-Man #1
Argosy Communications $2.50

Troll #1
Image $2.50

Ultraman #1
Nemesis $2.25

Warhide #1
Marvel UK $1.95

Xombi #0
DC Comics $1.95

good & cheap

Good-readin' books you can still pick up cheap!

STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI © & ™ MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

Strikeforce: Morituri #1-#20

Writer: ***Peter B. Gillis***
Artists: ***Brent Anderson, Scott Williams, and Whilce Portacio***
Current Total Value: ***$30 ($1.50 each)***

We realize that when you see 20 issues for 30 bucks, you think right away that it's not that cheap. (The blow lessens a little after you calculate that each book is $1.50.) But they're all terrific, and it would be a disservice to the title not to group 'em as a whole. These entertaining, and certainly underrated, books were groundbreaking because the main theme of *Strikeforce: Morituri* was death, and the theme was dealt with maturely.

The story is set in a future in which the Earth is being pillaged by an alien race known as The Horde—until Earth scientists decide to strike back. What these scientists do is put a normal human through a process in which each person acquires a different superpower with which to battle The Horde as a soldier/superhero. But these capabilities have their price: the immense power each human harbors inside will prove fatal within a year's time. The cast, due to the nature of their powers, changed constantly, sometimes surprisingly; never before had death been dealt with in such a mature manner.

These 20 books were done by creators Gillis and Anderson, whose work presented here is perhaps the finest of their careers. This was also one of Williams' and Portacio's first "big" assignments as inker and fill-in penciler, respectively. ☆

TOP 100 OCTOBER 1993

Here's the list for OCTOBER... the countdown of the most-ordered titles, as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1. Spawn #12
2. Gambit #1
3. X-Men # 27
4. Uncanny X-Men #307
5. Cyberforce #1
6. WildC.A.T.s #5
7. X-Men 2099 #3
8. Batman #502
9. Detective Comics #669
10. X-Force #29
11. Superman #84
12. Adventures of Superman #507
13. X-Men Unlimited #3
14. Vanguard #1
15. Superman, The Man of Steel #28
16. Action Comics #694
17. Wolverine #76
18. Team Youngblood #2
19. Savage Dragon #5
20. Dark Dominion #1
21. Prophet #2
22. Venom: The Madness #2
23. Stormwatch #16
24. X-Factor #97
25. Brigade #6
26. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #22
27. Code Name: Stryke Force #3
28. Solar, Man of the Atom #29
29. Amazing Spider-Man #384
30. Lobo #1
31. Avengers #369
32. Cable #6
33. Bloodstrike #7
34. Wildstar: Sky Zero #3
35. Wildstar: Sky Zero #4
36. Supreme #7
37. Spider-Man #41
38. Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi #1
39. Images of Shadowhawk #2
40. Harbinger #25
41. Spider-Man 2099 #14
42. Warriors of Plasm #3
43. Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #7
44. Superpatriot #3
45. Sludge #1
46. Blaze #1
47. Bloodshot #12
48. Second Life of Doctor Mirage #3
49. Robin #2
50. Ren & Stimpy #13
51. Daredevil: Man Without Fear #3
52. Secret Weapons #5
53. Avengers West Coast #101
54. X-O Manowar #24
55. Night Man #1
56. Spectacular Spider-Man #207
57. Web of Spider-Man #107
58. Wolverine-Punisher: Damaging Evidence #2
59. Daredevil #323
60. Ghost Rider #44
61. CGW: Vortex #1
62. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #55
63. Catwoman #5
64. Incredible Hulk #412
65. Magnus: Robot Fighter #32
66. Eternal Warrior #18
67. Shadowman #21
68. H.A.R.D. Corps #14
69. Rai & The Future Force #17
70. Silver Surfer #87
71. X-Men Adventures #14
72. Archer & Armstrong #18
73. Sandman #56
74. Doom 2099 #12
75. Thunderstrike #3
76. Punisher 2099 #11
77. Tribe #4
78. Excalibur #72
79. Wolverine in Global Jeopardy
80. Prime #5
81. Aquaman: Time & Tide #1
82. Fantastic Four #383
83. Prototype #3
84. Mantra #4
85. Hardcase #5
86. Batman: Two-Face Strikes Twice #1
87. Childrens Crusade #1
88. Strangers #5
89. Bloodbath #1
90. Ghost Rider-Blaze: Spirits of Vengeance #16
91. Firearm #2
92. Freex #4
93. Exiles #3
94. Jurassic Park: Raptor #2
95. Bloodbath #2
96. Solution #2
97. Lethal Foes of Spider-Man #4
98. Spider-Woman #2
99. X-Men vs. Dracula #1
100. Batman: Two-Face Strikes Twice #2

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	6 (+1)	17 (-1)	38 (-4)
DC Comics	2 (-0)	9 (-1)	18 (+1)
Image	2 (-1)	15 (+1)	15 (-1)
Valiant	- (-0)	5 (+2)	13 (-1)
Dark Horse	- (-0)	1 (-3)	2 (-4)
Defiant	- (-0)	2 (+1)	2 (+1)
Malibu	- (-0)	1 (+1)	10 (+8)
Topps	- (-0)	- (-0)	1 (-0)
Axis Comics	- (-0)	- (-0)	1 (+1)
Mirage	- (-0)	- (-0)	0 (-1)
Continuity	- (-0)	- (-0)	0 (-0)

(+/-0 indicates change from last month's listings)

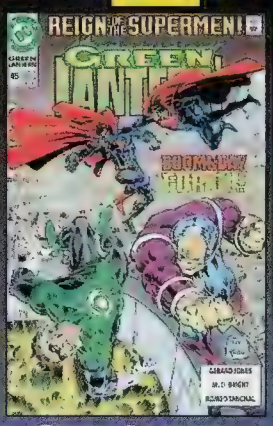
TOP 10 OCTOBER 1992

1. WetWorks #1
2. X-Men #15
3. Ravage 2099 #1
4. Uncanny X-Men #295
5. X-Force #17
6. Spider-Man 2099 #2
7. Spawn #6
8. X-Factor #85
9. Silver Surfer #75
10. Incredible Hulk #400

TOP 10 NOVEMBER 1993

We keep a very close watch on all the hottest books changing hands throughout the country. Here are the 10 best-selling comics:

1



© DC Comics

Green Lantern #46
Artist
M. D. Bright
Writer
Gerard Jones

After a lengthy lapse into predictability, the *Wizard* Top Ten has once again become its usual unpredictable self, the out-in-left-field popularity chart spotlighting the country's hottest books. It's just more proof that the speculative market is dying a painful death.

Okay, now that I've used up some of the space I have to fill, let's go into why this copy of *GL* is here. Is it because Green Lantern has one of the (if not the) coolest costumes in comics? Uh-uh. Is it because Bane shows up and beats up on some rich guy in a Halloween costume? Nope, that's an entirely different book. This is a severely under-ordered return of Superman crossover, and it is H-O-T.

2

© Marvel

Moon Knight #55
Artist
Stephen Platt
Writer
Terry Kavanagh

Wow! Oh my god! Holy crap! Todd McFarlane has left Spawn and is now drawing Moon Knight! *Alert the media! Wake the neighb*— Oh wait, that's not McFarlane, just an amazing simulation.

All joking aside, Stephen Platt, the penciler on *Moon Knight*, is a pretty good artist, and while his style is reminiscent of a certain Canadian hellspawn chronicler, fans aren't criticizing, they're buying. And buying. And buying. Heck, *Moon Knight* #55 is so hot, it went to a second printing shortly after its release, and it rose in value something like 400%. It would appear Marvel has a hot new star in their stable (no, not Moon Knight, bonehead—I'm talking 'bout Platt).

3

© Marvel

Daredevil #320
Artist: Scott McDaniel
Writer: D. G. Chichester

How weird is this month's Top Ten? Green Lantern at number one? Moon Knight at number two? Daredevil at numbers three and four? Man, the times they are a-changin'.

Anyway, with what appears to be a growing trend in the comic market today, this book was grossly under-ordered. What makes it so popular is the fact that this issue kicks off Hornhead's major "revamp for the '90s," which includes his getting a new set of duds and his getting a brand new sidekick: Elektra. Okay, she may not be new, but she's back from the dead, and that counts for something. And she's a ninja, and ninjas are cool. Go ask Frank Miller if you don't believe me.

4

© Marvel

Daredevil #319
Artist: Scott McDaniel
Writer: D.G. Chichester

Hey...somebody is chucking superheroes off the Empire State Building! Cool.

Anyway, this, like the *Daredevil* spotlighted at the number three slot, is part of the very popular "Fall From Grace" storyline. I can't say too much more other than what I've already said, so let's talk about *Seinfeld*. What a great show. It's on Thursday nights on NBC (check local listings for the time), and it's one of the best things on TV these days, along with *The Simpsons* (that's not a tie-in with this issue's cover—it really is a great show). Ooo...look at that, I've filled all this space.

5

© Marvel

Ren & Stimpy #1
Artist: Don Slott
Writer: Mike Kazaleh

Climbing four notches since last month's listing, the dynamic duo of the wiry Chihuahua and the potato-shaped feline continues to be a fan favorite, proving once again that you can be an outside licensed product and still make it big in comics. The fact that Ren and Stimpy have a huge fan following, due to their cartoon show, and that they have more licensed products than you can wave a shaved yak at, has helped make the comic successful, but another factor helped make this book. What is it? Why, it's today's magic phrase, boys and girls: "under-ordering." Yup. As we said last month, *high demand + low supply = hot book worth big bucks.*

6

© Ultraverse

Prime #2
Artist: Norm Breyfogle
Writer: G. Jones & L. Strazewski

Holding at the number six slot is *Prime*, the best title from Malibu's line of very cool Ultraverse books. Now, you may ask why this issue is on the charts and not issue #1, Prime's first appearance. Well, *Prime* #1 is a hot book, but, since it was a first issue of an all-new line of comics, it was pretty heavily ordered, and, because of that, there's plenty of copies out there. We all know what happens with a title's second issue...*order cut*! Yeah, fearing that fans will only buy the first issue of the series and then drop it, dealers chop their orders. Big mistake with *Prime* (and the other Ultraverse titles).

7

© DC Comics

Batman #497
Artist: Jim Aparo
Writer: Doug Moench

If you want to try something kind of amusing, take an eraser and rub the picture of the cover to *Batman* #497, erasing Bane's head. Pretty cool, huh? Headless Bane. Hahaha... sniff...hahaha.
Hmm...I think I'm going insane writing about the same books over and over again in this chart. Anyway, this is the issue that made news out in the real world (you know, outside the comic industry) and sent droves of hungry non-comic fans hurtling to the comic stores, where they bought up copies of the "last Batman story" left and right. That, along with all the new fans which the "Knightfall" storyline garnered, made this very historic issue very, very hot.

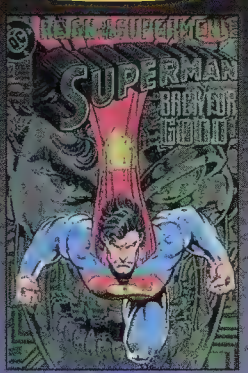
8

© DC Comics

Sword of Azrael #1
Artist: Joe Quesada
Writer: Dennis O'Neil

Moving down six notches from last month's listing (that's what happens when an issue's price tag gets a little too steep) is the first appearance of Jean Paul Valley, better known to most comic fans as Azrael. This is all fine and good, but since Azrael replaced Bruce Wayne as Batman when Bane broke Batman's back, *Sword of Azrael* #1 has taken on a whole new importance: the first appearance of the new Batman! Pretty important issue. As an added bonus, this comic has fantastic art and a story that is easy to follow and actually makes sense! That's quite a rarity in many of today's "finest" comic publications.

9



© DC Comics

Superman #82
Artist: Dan Jurgens
Writer: Dan Jurgens

How much cooler does Superman look now that he has long hair? Moving up one notch from last month's listing is the chromium-covered *Superman* #82, the return of the Man of Steel. What makes this comic so great? Well, for starters, the chromium cover is one of the sharper (though still godforsaken) gimmick covers out there. Nice effect. The story is great (except for the crappy ending), and the art and guest stars are fantastic. All fine and good, but since retailers were burned so bad by over-ordering *Adventures of Superman* #500, they didn't order enough of *Superman* #82, and boom, a hot book is born.

10

© DC Comics

Batman #500
Artist: Aparo, Austin & Manley
Writer: Doug Moench

Looking over the complete Top Ten this month, it's interesting to note that no Valiant or Image comics made the chart at all. Actually, with the exception of *Prime*, every book is Marvel and DC.
Anyway, *Batman* #500 makes the charts for the obvious reasons. It's a giant-sized (64 pages!) rematch between Bane and Batman—the Azrael Batman, that is—the story and art are really fantastic, and the cover, while it is a (godforsaken) gimmick cover, is pretty nice. Not that you can tell from this picture, but the cover is die-cut, and folds out to reveal the new hi-tech Batman beneath, highlighted by embossing and a multi-colored mirror board. Very sweet. ☆

Wizard Market WATCH

by
Jon Warren

Marvel, Malibu & Valiant on the Rise

RECENT (1992-1993)

The recent market this month is pretty much a continuation of last month. Marvel continues to creep up in market share, while DC slipped a tiny bit due to a leveling off of Superman and Batman sales. Image stayed pretty much the same, while Valiant inched up a bit on the strength of some strong new releases. Malibu is on the rise with the growing popularity of the Ultraverse.

- DC

Superman #82 and *Green Lantern* #46 are two of the hottest DCs at this time. *Batman* has leveled off in the wake of all the Superman excitement. But the new *Batman Animated Movie* in December might change the situation. Though Superman is the buzzword in the DC market, DC also seems to be the realm of the sleeper. The audiences of *The Spectre*, *The Flash* and the Milestone universe are increasing.

The *Sandman* series is as hot as ever! Our Wizard Network advisors told us to keep an eye on the back-issue price of #51. It could be on the rise in the near future. Sandman trading cards will be out soon, ya know. Hey, DC—keep up the good work!

- MARVEL

Daredevil #319 and the *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* series by Frank Miller are the hottest things going in the Marvel camp. The two have stirred interest in the original Frank Miller run in *Daredevil* #158-181. *Ren & Stimpy* is still on retailers' best-seller lists, and shows no signs of slowing. The *X-Men* cartoon is worth its ratings in gold. The #1 Saturday morning cartoon is #1 with retailers, too. Viewers of the cartoon (mostly a younger crowd) come flooding into their local comics shop looking for the latest issues of their favorite series.

- IMAGE

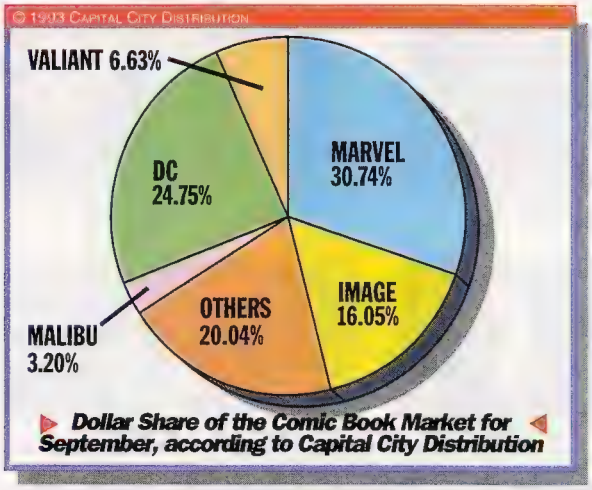
Spawn and *Pitt* are leading the way for Image. There's still plenty of demand for these two, but that may or may not translate into future increases in value. Other Image books are currently in a "wait and see" mode. More than one retailer told us they were apprehensive about the affect the Wal-Mart multi-packs of *Spawn* and *Youngblood* would have on the market. So far it seems that demand is still strong for *Spawn*, but *Youngblood* has cooled off a bit in the back-issue market.

- VALIANT

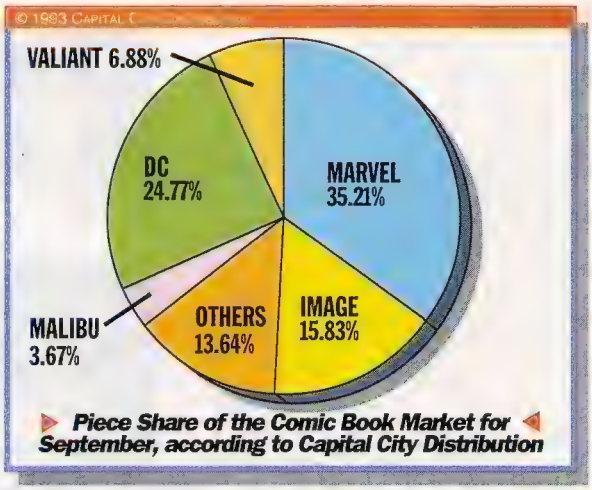
Several retailers reported *Bloodshot* #6 is still a steaming issue at current prices, possibly because of the new *Ninjak* series. *X-O Manowar* is doing extremely well. Most other Valiant titles are in a holding pattern. The hard-to-find pre-Unity issues are still in demand by collectors, but the current prices are keeping some collectors from jumping in.

- Other Companies

Special limited Gold and Platinum editions have peaked, according to the majority of dealers we polled. One advisor reported price resistance, even at prices signifi-



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for September, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for September, according to Capital City Distribution

cantly below current price guide prices. We are acting accordingly, adjusting the Wizard Price Guide to reflect this information. Just in case this is a temporary trend, we are reducing certain prices on these limited editions very slowly. Remember, prices do fluctuate from region to region; the *Wizard* price is an average of prices reported from all regions.

On the bright side, watch out for *Bone* by Jeff Smith. It's becoming the success story of the year. First printings of the first few issues are extremely hard to find. Moondog's in Chicago put it this way: "Do you like Walt Kelly? Carl Barks? The Wizard Of Oz? Then how about a jam of all three, orchestrated by the freshly-Eisnered maestro, Jeff Smith? Make your mind laugh and your heart glow; read *Bone*!" Wizard Special Advisor Dave Alexander summed it up: "To comics shops wanting to reach the female market: ORDER *BONE*! How many reviews calling *Bone* and Jeff Smith pure genius do you have to read before you begin to order?" 'Nuff said!

Topps continues to enjoy better-than-average success with their bagged movie comics.

Ultraverse is making a hit in some parts of the country, moving into Image/Valiant territory with aggressive advertising. According to many retailers who told us they are sold out of titles like *Hardcase*, *Prime* and *The Strangers*, the Ultraverse market efforts are beginning to pay off. The second issues of these three series may have been severely under-ordered by retailers. We'll keep an eye on the market for you—be watching these pages.

The Crow, by Caliber Press, is flying high. Prices for first printings moved skyward again this month.

Vampirella, published by Harris, is still doing extremely well, with a large number of retailers recommending hefty price increases for the first three issues, which you'll notice in this month's Guide. Keep watching the Guide for up-to-the-minute values on this hot title!

For Defiant, *Warriors Of Plasm* is doing very well. Watch out, Shooter's back with a vengeance!

MODERN AGE (1970-1990)

DC

Sandman back issues are flying out the door, according to most retailers we surveyed. Most-in-demand at this writing is issue #8. Top DC back issues from the 1970s include the *Swamp Thing* series by Berni Wrightson and *The Shadow* first series. On the other end of the price spectrum, prices for *Animal Man* and *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* have moved downward slightly.

MARVEL

Amazing Spider-Man #300, the first major appearance of Venom, moved up in the Price Guide from $65 to $70. The new price reflects the continuing strong demand for this issue, as reported by our nationwide network of pricing advisors.

The success of the *X-Men* cartoon has stimulated demand for Wolverine. The original *Wolverine* mini-series has particularly bene-

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1 **Todd McFarlane** upcoming: *Spawn/Batman*

2 **Jim Lee** *WildC.A.T.s, Deathblow*

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

3 **Joe Quesada** *Ninjak*

4 **Erik Larsen** *Savage Dragon*, upcoming: *Freak Force*

5 **Marc Silvestri** *Cyberforce*

6 **Bart Sears** upcoming: *Violator*

7 **Dale Keown** *Pitt*

8 **Sam Kieth** *The Maxx*

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

9 **Jae Lee** *Spider-Man, WildC.A.T.s Trilogy*

10 **Frank Miller** *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For*

PHOTO: LYNN VARLEY

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

PHOTO: LYNN VARLEY

1 **Frank Miller** *Sin City: A Dame to Kill for, Daredevil: Man Without Fear*

2 **Peter David** *Hulk, Aquaman: T. & T., Spider-Man 2099, Sachs & Violens*

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

3 **Neil Gaiman** *Sandman, The Children's Crusade*

4 **Jim Shooter** *Warriors of Plasm*

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

PHOTO: MITCH JENKINS

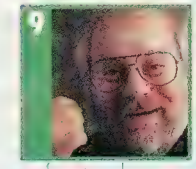
5 **Alan Moore** *1963*

6 **John Byrne** *John Byrne's Next Men*

7 **Matt Wagner** *Sandman Mystery Theatre*

8 **Jim Starlin** upcoming: *'Breed*

PHOTO: ALBERT L. ORTEGA, © 1993 WIZARD PRESS



9 **Chris Claremont** *Aliens vs. Predator*

10 **Mike Grell** *Shaman's Tears*

PHOTO: LIBERTY STUDIOS

The Top Ten Hottest Artists and Writers lists are compiled through a nationwide survey.

fited from this new interest, and prices are inching upward.

As reported earlier, the *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* series by Frank Miller has rejuvenated demand for the original Frank Miller run in *Daredevil*. As a result of a consensus among our Advisors, virtually the entire Miller series moved up in price this month. Depending upon future developments at Marvel, this may be just the beginning.

• Other Companies

Cerebus, anyone? Can you hear the sound of a distant rumble? It may be the thundering roar of approaching Aardvark hooves (do aardvarks have hooves?). We'll ask Dave Sim and get back to you. In the meantime, more than one retailer wondered if they were the only ones being asked for early issues of this ground-breaking independent. The answer is: absolutely not! Nearly every retailer in our special advisor network reported an increase in demand for early *Cerebus* issues.

SILVER AGE (1955-1970)

DC

Advanced Silver Age DC collectors will be thrilled to see our new listings of classic DC War titles. *All-American Men at War*, *G. I. Combat*, and others were added to the Price Guide this time, and more will be added each month. We're responding to your requests to expand the *Wizard* Price Guide listings, making it the most comprehensive price guide in the universe. In fact, you'll see lots of new listings of classic titles this month. All part of our continuing efforts here at Price Guide Headquarters.

MARVEL

It seems to be feast or famine for Marvel Silver Age. The key issues of every title are strong, with many retailers holding standing orders from clients seeking high-grade Silver Age keys. Although the demand is strong for high-grade issues, many retailers in the Wizard Network reported a slack demand for mid-grade (Very Good to Fine) issues. This situation seems bound to change as prices for high-grade examples continue to skyrocket. Most collectors can't afford the prices of Near Mint Silver Age issues, so they must eventually buy a lower grade if they want to own a copy. Those with an eye towards the investment end of collecting should keep in mind that mid-grade copies of Silver Age issues have gone up about as much as their shiny Mint counterparts. To become a believer in Silver Age Marvels in any grade, all one needs to do is take a look at the price trends of the last ten years. If the comic was selling ten years ago for $20 in VG (Very Good), its value is at least double or triple that of today, in most cases. So, collectors should not avoid mid-grade comics if temptingly priced. Waiting for Near Mint copies to surface can be a long wait indeed. On the other hand, retailers might take a look at how long they've inventoried older back issues, and discount those that have been sitting around too long. It makes good business sense to reduce prices on older comics that aren't selling in your area. If the book has been sitting in your store for six months or more, make a collector happy.

Other Companies

TV-related comics are booming (try to find the two *Perry Mason* issues with Raymond Burr photo covers, or the two *Andy Griffith Show* comics—they are scarce!). *The Beverly Hillbillies* is at the top of many collectors' lists, now that the word is out about the upcoming movie. Other hot TV comics are *Star Trek* (first series by Gold Key), *The Green Hornet* (also by Gold Key) and *The Jetsons*. Here at PG HQ, we're working around the clock to add important titles to the Price Guide, so that you will have the scoop on current market values.

The toy market is ablaze, and thousands of female collectors are searching for original Barbie dolls (reportedly worth mega-bucks). The craze for anything having to do with Barbie has crossed over into the comics market. The original set of *Barbie And Ken* comics from the 1960s has been experiencing a resurgence of demand, with the first issue now bringing over $200. Check this issue of the Price Guide for prices on each of the five issues.

GOLDEN AGE (1938-1954)

Collectors have a seemingly insatiable appetite for Golden Age comics with nice pages and glossy covers. But unlike Silver Age, which is very condition-driven, Golden Age superhero comics from the top publishers (DC, Marvel [Timely], Fawcett, Centaur, etc.) are hot in virtually all grades.

DC

Flash Comics and *Green Lantern Comics* from the 1940s are at the top of the list this month. *Superman*, *Action Comics*, *Detective Comics* and *Batman* issues from this time period are also hot. Sleeper: *Action Comics* #23—check it out!

Reported sales: *All American* #61 (VF): $1000, *Batman* #42 (VF): $550, *Detective* #80 (NM): $700, #84 (NM): $500, #85 (NM): $700, *Flash Comics* #46 & #48 (NM with double covers): $600 each, *More Fun* #101 (VF): $2500.

MARVEL (TIMELY)

Captain America is still the leader in the Golden Age Marvel category, although a couple of our GA advisors reported renewed demand for some of the more esoteric titles like *Red Raven* and *Mystic*.

Reported sales: *Captain America Comics* #29 (VF): $700, #38 (VF): $600. ☆

Jon Warren is the Senior Price Guide Editor, working out of Chattanooga, Tenn.

ATTENTION RETAILERS

Our price guide database has been revamped to significantly expand dealer input and speed compiling. Participating dealers who complete our monthly survey forms (perhaps 15 minutes of your time) will receive a copy of our new, participants-only newsletter, *Entertainment Retailing*. This publication, created for all entertainment retailers in today's diversified marketplace, features information designed to help retailers maximize their store's potential. Each month, you'll find pricing info to be featured in the next issue of *Wizard*, and up-to-date industry news, plus profiles of successful retailers. Thank you to those who have already responded. To participate, write or fax, on letterhead, to DEALER NEWSLETTER, Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. Fax: 914-426-6071.

November 1-December 15

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

***Wizard* is not responsible for false or lost show information. Patrons of shows should telephone prior to attending to verify information.**

ALABAMA

NOV 6, HUNTSVILLE, Card & Comic Show, Jaycee Community Bldg, Old Airport, T:60 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 205-881-6222

ARKANSAS

NOV 19-21, ROGERS, Collectible Show, Dixieland Mall, T:40 A:Free, Fri-Sat: 10am-9pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 316-421-8822

NOV 27, MTN. HOME, Comic & Card Show, Ramada Inn, 1127 Hw 62E, T:30 A:$1, 10am-6pm, 501-492-4144

DEC 4, JONESBORRO, Comic & Card Show, Park Inn, 1421 Caraway Rd., T:35 A:$2, 9am-6pm, 501-794-3394

CALIFORNIA

NOV 1, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn University, 4961 N. Cedar, T:24 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, 209-292-2890

NOV 3, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 3, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 4, SANTA ANA, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 5, SAN JOSE, Card & Comic Show, Dry Creek Shopping Ctr., 1712 Meridian Ave., T:18 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 408-267-0927

NOV 6, LODI, Comic & Sportscard Show, Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, 413 Lockeford St., T:25 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 209-368-7345

NOV 6, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 6-7, SIMI VALLEY, Sportscard & Comic Show, Mountaingate Plaza Mall, 1151 W. L.A. Ave., T:50 A:Free, 805-529-0370

NOV 6-7, SAN FRANCISCO, Sportscard & Comic Show, Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Ave., T:80 A:$2, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-4pm, 415-386-9036

NOV 6-7, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 7, STOCKTON, Baseball & Comic Show, Stockton Inn, Hwy 99 & Waterloo Rd., T:36 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 209-948-0976

NOV 7, SAN DIEGO, Mission Valley Comic Convention, 4780-B Mission George Place, T:40 A:$1.50, 10am-3pm, 619-281-0056

NOV 7, SANTA ANA/ORANGE CTY, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 8, HUNTINGTON BEACH, Comics, Toys & Collectibles Show, Elks Lodge, 7711 Talbert Ave., T:45 A:$1, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 9, TORRANCE, Comic, Toy & Collectible Show, Torrance Cultural Arts Ctr., 3300 Civic Ctr. Dr., T:58 A:$1, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 10, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 10, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave, T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 11, SANTA ANA, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 12, SAN DIEGO, Comic & Card Show, Scottish Rite Ctr., 1895 Camino Del Rio S., T:45 A:$1.50, 5pm-9:30pm, 619-669-1759

NOV 13, SAN DIEGO, Greatest Mini-Con, Scottish Rite Center-Mission Valley, 1895 Camino Del Rio S., A:$2.50, 619-273-7048

NOV 13, SAN DIEGO, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, 9335 Kearney Mesa Rd., T:30 A:$1.50, 5:30pm-9:30pm, 619-669-1759

NOV 13, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 13, SAN LUIS OBISPO, Comic, Baseball & Collectible Show, Cal Poly Univ. #220 Grand & Perimeter Rd., T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 805-547-1741

NOV 13-14, WALNUT, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr., T:200 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 13-14, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 13-14, SANTA ANA/ORANGE CITY, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 14, SAN MATEO, Comic & Card Show, Dunfey San Mateo Hotel, 1770 So. Amphitheatre Blvd., T:30 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 415-386-9036

NOV 15, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn University, 4961 N. Cedar, T:24 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, 209-292-2890

NOV 16, BUENA PARK, Sportscard, Toys & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 7000 Beach Blvd., T:45 A:$1, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 17, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 17, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 18, SANTA ANA, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 19-21, LOS ANGELES, Lavacon, LAX Hilton, T:40 A:$5, 818-773-7957

NOV 20, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 20-21, PALMDALE, Comic & Card Show, 2137 East Ave. R., T:35 A:$1, 9:30am-4pm, 805-947-4930

NOV 20-21, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave. Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 21, BUENA PARK, Comic & Non-Sportscard Show, Sequoia Athletic Club, 7530 Orangethorpe Ave., T:80 A:$3, 10am-4pm, 818-913-4046

NOV 21, MODESTO, Baseball & Comic Show, Steps & Variations, 1300 N. 9th St., T:22 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 209-948-0976

NOV 21, SAN DIEGO, Mission Valley Comic Convention, 4780-B Mission George Place, T:40 A:$1.50, 10am-3pm, 619-281-0056

NOV 21, SAN FRANCISCO, Con #9, Holiday Inn-Golden Gateway, 1500 Van Ness Ave., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 415-386-9036

NOV 21, SANTA ANA/ORANGE CTY, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 22, HUNTINGTON BEACH, Comic, Toys & Collectible Show, Elks Lodge, 7711 Talbert Ave., T:45 A:$1, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 23, TORRANCE, Comic, Toy & Collectible Show, Torrance Cultural Arts Ctr., 3300 Civic Ctr. Dr., T:58 A:$1, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 24, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 24, RIVERSIDE, Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 27, SAN DIEGO, Greatest Mini-Con, Scottish Rite Center-Mission Valley, 1895 Camino Del Rio S., A:$2.50, 619-273-7048

NOV 27, SAN DIEGO, Sportscard & Comic Show, La Mesa Women's Club, 5220 Wilson St., T:31 A:$1.50, 4:30pm-9pm, 619-669-1759

NOV 27-28, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave. Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

NOV 27-28, SANTA ANA/ORANGE CTY, Card & Comic Show, 1938 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 27, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

NOV 28, GLENDALE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo Rd., T:60 A:$2.50, 10am-4pm, 818-842-1861

NOV 28, SANTA ANA/ORANGE CTY, Card & Comic Show, 1928 E. Glenwood Pl., T:100 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 714-854-1991

NOV 30, BUENA PARK, Sportscard, Toys & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 7000 Beach Blvd., T:45 A:$1, 5pm-10pm, 714-854-1991

DEC 1, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 1, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 4, SAN LUIS OBISPO, Comic, Baseball & Collectible Show, Cal Poly Unv. #220 Grand & Perimeter Rd., T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 805-547-1741

DEC 4-5, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 4, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 5, STOCKTON, Comic & Collectable Show, Scottish Rite Temple, 33 W. Alpine Ave., T:40 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 916-452-3237

DEC 6, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn Unv., 4961 N. Cedar., T:24 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, 209-292-2890

DEC 8, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 8, RIVERSIDE, Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 11, LODI, Card & Comic Show, Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, 413 E. Lockeford St., T:25 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 209-368-7345

DEC 11, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 11-12, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave. Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 12, SAN DIEGO, Greatest Mini-Con, Scottish Rite Center-Mission Valley, 1895 Camino Del Rio S., A:$2.50, 619-273-7048

DEC 12, MODESTO, Baseball & Comic Show, Steps & Variations, 1300 N. 9th Street, T:22 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 209-948-0976

DEC 15, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Whse., 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 15, RIVERSIDE, Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

CANADA

NOV 14, MONTREAL, Holiday Inn—Crown Plaza Downtown Montreal, 420 Sherbrooke West (Metro Place-des-Arts), T:80 A:C$4, 10am-6pm, 514-337-8931

NOV 21, VANCOUVER, Vancouver Comicon, Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Strt., T:50 A:$2, 11am-5pm, 602-322-6412

CONNECTICUT

NOV 7, BLOOMFIELD, Comic & Card Show, Christ the King Church, Wintonbury & Blue Hills Ave., T:25 A:.99, 10am-4pm, 203-243-0738

NOV 14, MILFORD, Baseball & Comic Show, Knights of

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

Columbus, 625 Bridgeport Ave., T:60 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 203-874-3545
NOV 14, VERNON, Sportscard & Comic Show, The Colony, 51 Hartford Turnpike, T:40 A:.99, 10am-4pm, 203-646-2276
NOV 21, SHELTON, Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Exit 12 off Rt #8, T:40 A:$3, 10am-4pm, 203-331-4345
NOV 28, DANBURY, Card & Comic Show, Ethan Allen Inn, 21 Lake Ave., T:52 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 203-746-7531
NOV 28, WALLINGFORD, Baseball & Comic Show, Stillwood Inn, 1074 S. Colony Rd., T:58 A:$.99, 9:30am-3:30pm, 203-874-3545
DEC 12, MILFORD, Baseball & Comic Show, Knights of Columbus, 625 Bridgeport Ave., T:60 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 203-874-3545

FLORIDA

NOV 6-7, WINTER PARK, Comic Show, Winter Park Mall, 100 N. Orlando Ave., T:50, Sat:10am-9pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 407-469-3759
NOV 6-7, MIAMI, Card & Comic Expo, Radisson Centre, 711 NW. 72nd Ave., T:150 A:$5, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 305-682-0712
NOV 6-7, FT. LAUDERDALE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Coral Ridge Mall, 3200 N. Federal Hwy., T:50 A:Free, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 305-386-4099
NOV 6-7, ORLANDO, Sportscard & Comic Show, Central Fl. Fairgrounds Bldg. A., 4603 W. Colonial Dr., T:60 A:Free. 10am-5pm, 813-297-5432
NOV 7, N. FT. MYERS, Baseball & Comic Show, Robert E. Lee (Best Western), 13021 N. Cleveland Ave., T:25 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 813-772-0254
NOV 13-14, CORAL GABLES, Sportscard & Comic Show, Miracle Ctr., 3301 Coral Way, T:33 A:Free, Sat:10am-8pm, Sun:11am-8pm, 305-386-4099
NOV 14, PUNTA GORDA, Baseball & Comic Show, Memorial Auditorium & Civic Ctr., 75 Taylor St., T:35 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 813-574-7731
NOV 20-21, JACKSONVILLE, Comicon '93, Holiday Inn East, 5865 Arlington Expressway, T:80 A:$5, Sat:10am-8pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 904-744-1985
NOV 20-21, LAKELAND, Sportscard & Comic Show, Lakeland Mall, 1108 E. Memorial Blvd., T:50 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 813-297-5432
NOV 21, JACKSONVILLE, Comicquest Show, Holiday Inn Orange Park, 150 Park Ave., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
NOV 21, FT. MYERS, Baseball & Comic Show, Ramada (Airport) Hotel, 12635 Cleveland Ave., T:35 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 813-574-7731
NOV 21, ORLANDO, Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 7900 S. Orange Blossom Trail, T:30 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 407-469-3759
NOV 21, VERO BEACH, Holiday Happening Card & Comic Show, 3384 Ocean Dr., T:15 A:$.25, 10am-4pm, 407-778-2400
NOV 27-28, FT. LAUDERDALE, The Bazaar Monthly Comic & Card Show, 3200 W. Oakland Park Blvd., T:30 A:Free, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 305-537-3196
NOV 27-28, N. MIAMI BEACH, Sportscard & Comic Show, 163rd St. Mall, 1421 NE 163rd St., T:35 A:Free, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-5:30pm, 305-386-4099
NOV 28, SARASOTA, Sarasota-Manatee Fantasy Fair, Holiday Inn Airport, 7150 N. Tamiami Trail (US 41), T:45 A:$3, 10am-5pm, 813-758-3684
DEC 4, GAINESVILLE, Jubilee Enterprises, Holiday Inn (West), 7415 N.W. 8th Ave., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
DEC 4-5, FT.LAUDERDALE, Sports & Comic Collectibles, Coral Ridge Mall, 3200 N. Federal Hwy., T:50 A:Free, Sat:10am-7pm Sun:11am-5pm, 305-386-4099
DEC 5, JACKSON, Jubilee Convention, Holiday Inn, 9150 Bay Meadows Rd., T:35 A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
DEC 11-12, CORAL GABLES, Sportscard & Comic Show, Miracle Ctr., 3301 Coral Way, T:33 A:Free, Sat:10am-8pm, Sun:11am-8pm, 305-386-4099

GEORGIA

NOV 5-7, LILBURN, PT Shows Inc., 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri: 4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
NOV 6-7, ATLANTA, Legends Collector's Show, Ramada Inn, Airport North, T:20 A:$2, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 706-234-8210
NOV 12-14, LILBURN, PT Shows Inc., 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
NOV 13-14, GAINESVILLE, Legends Collector's Show, Lakeshore Mall, Washington St., T:40 A:Free, Sat:10am-9pm, Sun:Noon-6pm, 706-234-8210
NOV 19-21, LILBURN, PT Shows Inc., 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
NOV 20, SAVANNAH, Comicquest Show, Hilton De Soto, 15 E. Liberty St., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
NOV 26-28, LILBURN, PT Shows Inc., 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:11am-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 3-5, LILBURN, PT Shows Inc., 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 10-12, LILBURN, PT Shows Inc., 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 11-12, ATLANTA, Legends Collectors Show, Vantage Hotel, 2180 Northlake Pkwy., T:20, Sat-Sun:10am-6pm, 706-234-8210

ILLINOIS

NOV 6, GLEN ELLYN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 1250 Roosevelt Rd., T:32 A:Free, 9am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
NOV 7, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sportscard, Comic & Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 & Three Oaks Rd., T:45 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204
NOV 7, N. CHICAGO, Comics & Card Show, N. Chicago Inn, 2315 Greenbay Rd., T:30 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-336-9963
NOV 7, OAK LAWN, Oak Lawn Comics & Cards Show, Fatima Knights of Columbus, 5830 W. 95th St., T:33 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 708-423-1758
NOV 12-14, WESTMONT/OAKBROOK, Sportcard & Comic Show, Inland Exposition Ctr., 400 E. Ogen Ave., A:$2, Fri:5:30pm-9:30pm, Sat:9:30am-4pm, Sun:9:30am-3:30pm, 708-980-1975
NOV 14, SKOKIE, Niles Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, 5300 W. Towhy Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-518-8177
NOV 14, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sportscard, Comic & Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 & Three Oaks Rd., T:45 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204
NOV 14, HILLSIDE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 4400 Frontage Rd., T:72 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 708-960-4700
NOV 14, MOLINE, Sportscard & Comics Show, Highland Park Bowl, 23rd Ave., T:18 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 309-786-8097
NOV 20, CHICAGO, Sportscard, Comic & Card Show, McKinley Park Fieldhouse, 2210 W. 39th St., T:30 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 312-247-2079
NOV 20, ROSEMONT, Sportsnews, Card & Comic Convention, Horizon Skyline, 6920 N. Manehiem on Lunt., A:$2, 9:30am-4pm, 708-980-1975
NOV 21, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sportscard, Comic & Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 & Three Oaks Rd., 708-309-8204
NOV 21, HOMETOWN, Annual Boy Scout Troop 682 Comics & Cards Show, Hometown School Gym, 8870 S. Duffy Ave., T:75 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 708-423-1758
NOV 27, HILLSIDE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 4400 Frontage Rd., T:72 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 708-960-4700
NOV 28, BERWYN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Sokol Berwyn, 6445 West 27th Place, T:32 A:Free, 9:30am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
NOV 28, OAK LAWN, Fatima Knights of Columbus, 5830 W. 95th St., T:33 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 708-423-1758
DEC 12, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sportscard, Comic Book & Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 & Three Oaks Rd., T:45 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204
DEC 12, SKOKIE, Niles Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, 5300 W. Towhy Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-518-8177

INDIANA

NOV 6, FORT WAYNE, Sportscard & Toy Show, Sunset Hall, 6809 S. Hanna St., T:65 A:$1, 9:30am-5pm, 219-447-5758
NOV 13, INDIANAPOLIS, Jubilee Conventions, Holiday Inn East, 6990 E. 21st St., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
NOV 14, FT. WAYNE, Jubilee Conventions, Holiday Inn, Exit 109A, A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
NOV 20, HAMMOND, Card & Comic Show, 7527 Kennedy Ave., T:29 A:$1, 219-865-1563
DEC 11, HAMMOND, Card & Comic Show, F.O.P. #57, 7527 Kennedy Ave., T:28 A:$1, 9:30am-2:30pm, 219-865-1563

IOWA

NOV 7, DAVENPORT, Sportscard & Comc Show, E. Davenport Turner Hall, 2113 E. 11th Street., T:26 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 309-786-8097
NOV 28, BETTENDORF, Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 909 Middle Rd., T:25 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 309-786-8097

KENTUCKY

NOV 6, LEXINGTON, Lex Trek 1, Card, Comic & Collectible Show, Heritage Hall, 430 W. Vine St., T:60+ A:$9.95, 10am-5pm, 606-269-1088
NOV 20, BOWLING GREEN, Comics, Cards, Collectibles Show, Greenwood Executive Inn, I-65 Exit 22, T:40 A:Free, 9am-4:30pm, 502-842-6492
DEC 11, BOWLING GREEN, Comics, Cards, Collectibles Show, Greenwood Executive Inn, I-65 Exit 22, T:40 A:Free, 9am-4:30pm, 502-842-6492

LOUISIANA

NOV 14, METAIRIE, New Orleans Comic Show, Howard Johnson's, 2261 N. Causeway Blvd., T:28 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
NOV 14, BATON ROUGE, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn S., I-12 & Airline Hwy., T:43 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 504-654-6228
NOV 20, COVINGTON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, I-12 @ Hwy 190, A:$1, 10am-5pm, 504-768-7499
NOV 21, THIBODAUX, Card & Comic Show, Captain Pierre's, 212 Bayou Rd., T:14 A:$1, 504-447-4136
NOV 28, LAFAYETTE, Comic & Sportscard Show, Holiday Inn, 2716 N.E. Evangeline Thruway, T:20 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 318-332-1832
DEC 12, BATON ROUGE, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn S., I-12 Airline Hwy., T:43 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 504-654-6228

MAINE

NOV 21,PORTLAND, Comic Showcase, Ramada Inn, 1230 Congress St., T:40 A:$5, 9am-3pm, 207-774-2215

MARYLAND

NOV 7, WALDORF, Comic Show, Waldorf JayCee's Hall, Rte. 310 N. & Rte. 5, T:26 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 301-870-5620
DEC 5, HUNT VALLEY, Clandestine Comic Show, Embassy Suites Hotel, 213 Internat'l Cir., A:$1, 11am-4pm, 410-252-4324

MASSACHUSETTS

NOV 7, CHICOPEE, Card & Comic Show, Nativity Church Hall, 780 Chicopee St., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 413-593-6046
NOV 14, PEABODY, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, T:40 A:$3, 10am-4pm, 203-331-4345
NOV 18-21, BILLERICA, Card & Comic Show, Billerica Mall, 480 Boston Rd., T:38 A:Free, mall hours, 617-289-8662
NOV 21, NATICK, Sportscard, Toys & Collectible Show, Crown Plaza (Holiday Inn), Rte. 9., T:50+ A:$2, 10am-4pm, 508-651-2716
NOV 21, WORCESTER, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, 500 Lincoln St., T:40 A:$2, 9am-3pm, 508-755-7148
DEC 4, PEABODY, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, T:40 A:$3, 10am-4pm, 203-331-4345

MICHIGAN

NOV 1, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
NOV 7, WARREN, Airborne Comic & Card Show, V.F.W. Post 9021, 32100 Ryan, T:24 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 313-468-0954
NOV 8, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
NOV 13, MUSKEGON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Aron's Restaraunt, 2511 Hall Rd., T:25 A:Free, 9:30am-4:30pm, 616-773-4031
NOV 14, ROSEVILLE, Airborne Card & Comic Show, Roseville V.F.W., T:45 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 313-468-0954
NOV 14, ROYAL OAK, Encore-Con Comic Show, American Legion Hall, 1815 Rochester Rd., A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 313-350-2633
NOV 15, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
NOV 22, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
NOV 27, MUSKEGON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Northway Lanes, 1751 Evanston Ave., A:Free, 9:30am-4:30pm, 616-773-4031
NOV 29, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show,

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
DEC 4, MUSKEGON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Northway Lanes, 1751 Evanston Ave., A:Free, 9:30am-4:30pm, 616-773-4031
DEC 5, E. LANSING, Spartan Comic Book Show, Kellogg Ctr., Michigan State Univ., Big Ten Rm. A, A:$1, 10am-4pm, 313-350-2633
DEC 6, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
DEC 12, ANN ARBOR, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn West, 2900 Jackson Rd., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
DEC 12, ROYAL OAK, Encore-Con Comic Show, American Legion Hall, 1815 Rochester Rd., A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 313-350-2633
DEC 13, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461

MISSOURI

NOV 6-7, JEFFERSON CITY, Sports Collectors & Comic Show, Ramada Inn, 1510 Jefferson St., T:40 A:$.25, 9am-5pm, 314-295-6395
NOV 7, KALAMAZOO, Jubilee Conventions, Holiday Inn Airport, 3522 Sprinkle Rd., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
NOV 13, SPRINGFIELD, Comic & Sportscard Show, Markham Inn, 2820 N. Glenstone, T:30 A:$1, 9am-4pm, 417-889-2529
NOV 28, ST. CHARLES, Sports Card & Comic Show, Stegton Regency, Hawks Nest and Bogey Rd., T:45 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 314-388-5288
DEC 11, SPRINGFIELD, Comic & Sportscard Show, Markham Inn, 2820 N. Glenstone, T:30 A:$1, 9am-4pm, 417-889-2529

MISSISSIPPI

DEC 11, NATCHEZ, Comic & Card Show, Ramada Hilltop Motel, T:10 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 601-442-6425

NEVADA

NOV 28, LAS VEGAS, Baseball & Comic Book Show, Showboat Hotel & Casino, 2800 Fremont St., T:80 A:$3, 10am-6pm, 702-658-1549

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NOV 11-14, SALEM, Card & Comic Show, Rockingham Mall, Rte. 28., A:Free, 617-289-8662

NEW JERSEY

NOV 2, HAZLET, Comic & Sportscard Show, Shore Point Inn, Rte. 35 South., T:15 A:$1, 5pm-9:30pm, 908-583-7915
NOV 4, WOODBRIDGE, Comic & Card Show, Forge Inn, Rte. 9 N., T:30 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 908-422-9365
NOV 6, PARAMUS, Card & Comic Show, Sports World, 200 Rte. 17 N., T:65 A:Free, Sat:10am-5pm, 201-342-8980
NOV 7, HAZLET, Collectors Showcase Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Rte. 35, T:50 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-291-1632
NOV 7, TINTON FALLS, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, Pkwy Exit 105, T:35 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, 908-531-9281
NOV 7, EDISON, Comic & Card Show, Congregation Beth El, Rte. 1, T:50 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-422-9365
NOV 7,WOODBRIDGE, Four Color Comic Art Convention, Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rte. 1 S., T:30 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955
NOV 11, WOODBRIDGE, Comic & Sportscard Show, Budget Motor Lodge, Rte. 9 N., T:30+ A:$1, 5pm-9:30pm, 908-583-7915
NOV 13-14, NEW BRUNSWICK, Card & Comic Show, Flea Market Bldg., US Rte. 1, T:52 A:Free, Sat:10am-9pm, Sun:10am-6pm, 908-238-4231
NOV 14, LINDEN, Card & Comic Show, Congregation Anshe Chesed, St. George Ave & Orchard Terr., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4:30pm, 908-925-8220, 908-486-8616
NOV 14, NEW MILFORD, Card & Comic Show, V.F.W. Post 4290, 267 Madison Ave., T:22 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 201-438-25300
NOV 14, ISELIN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Woodbridge Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rte. 1 S., T:30 A:$1.50, 9:30am-4:30pm, 609-655-7668
NOV 14, BORDENTOWN, Four Color Comic Art Convention, Days Inn, Rte. 206 N., T:30 A:$2,10am-4pm, 908-828-5955
NOV 18, ISELIN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Woodbridge Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rte. 1 S., T:25 A:$1.50, 5pm-9:30pm, 908-548-4977
NOV 18, E. BRUNSWICK, Comic & Sportscard Show, Mid-State Bowl, Mid-State Mall, T:20+ A:$1, 5pm-9:30pm, 908-583-7915
NOV 19, EDISON, Comic & Card Show, Middlesex County College, 155 Mill Road (Bunker Lounge), T:25 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 908-826-8039
NOV 21, E. BRUNSWICK, Card & Comic Show, Sheraton, Exit 9, T:50 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-422-9365
NOV 21, TOMS RIVER, Baseball, Card & Comic Show, Quality Inn, 815 Rte. 37 W., T:38 A:$1.50, 9:30am-4pm, 908-929-3466
NOV 21, MONTVALE, Card & Comic Show, Ramada Inn, 100 Chestnut Ridge Rd., T:48 A:$2, 9:30am-4pm, 201-342-8980
NOV 21, PARSIPPANY, Marvel Bullpen Reunion Show, Parsippany Pal., 33 Baldwin Rd., T:65 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 201-540-0004
NOV 21, ABERDEEN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Temple Shalom, Bethany Rd. & Ayrmont Dr., T:30 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-583-7915
NOV 21, GARFIELD, Card, Comic & Collectible Show, Boys & Girls Club, 490 Midland Ave., T:60 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 201-340-2218
NOV 26-27, PARAMUS, Card & Comic Show, Sports World, 22 Rte. 17 N., T:65 A:Free, Fri:5pm-9pm, Sat:10am-5pm, 201-342-8980
NOV 27-28, MORRISTOWN, Collectors Festival, The Headquarters Plaza Mall, T:60 A:Free, Sat:11am-8pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 908-291-1632
NOV 27, WAYNE, Collectors Convention, Firemens Convention Ctr., 1 Parish Dr., T:110 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 201-696-6217
NOV 28, FLEMINGTON, Comic & Sportscard Show, American Legion, Rte. 31, T:25 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 908-479-6603
NOV 28, TOMS RIVER, Baseball & Comic Show, E. Dover Fire Co., Fischer Blvd., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-929-4630
NOV 28, TINTON FALLS, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, Pkwy. Exit 105, T:35 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, 908-531-9281
DEC 2, WOODBRIDGE, Comic & Card Show, Forge Inn, Rte. 9 N., T:30 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 908-422-9365
DEC 4, UNION, Collectors Showcase, Union Boys & Girls Club, 1050 Jeanette Ave., T:45 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-874-4837
DEC 4, CARTERET, Comic,Sports & Non-Sports Show, St. Demetrius Convention Ctr., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-855-5852
DEC 5, BORDENTOWN, Four Color Comic Art Convention, Days Inn, Rte. 206 N., T:30 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955
DEC 5, LINDEN, Card, Comic & Collectible Show, Congregation Anshe Chesed, George Ave & Orchard Terr., T:40 A:$2, 10am-4:30pm, 908-486-8616
DEC 5, LITTLE FERRY, Card & Comic Show, VFW Post 809, 100 Main St.,T:30 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 201-438-2530
DEC 5, HAZLET Collectors Showcase Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Rte. 35, T:50 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-291-1632
DEC 7, MONTVALE, Card & Comic Show, Ramada Inn, 100 Chestnut Ridge Rd., T:35 A:$2, 5pm-10pm, 201-342-8980
DEC 10, EDISON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Middlesex County College, 155 Mill Rd. (Cafe A&B), T:70 A:$2, 5pm-10pm, 908-826-8039
DEC 12, TINTON FALLS, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, Pkwy. Exit 105, T:35 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, 908-531-9281
DEC 12, NEW MILFORD, Card & Comic Show, VFW Post 4290, 267 Madison Ave., T:22 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 201-438-2530
DEC 12, TOMS RIVER, Collectors Comic Show, Elks Post #1875, Washington & Cliffton Ave., T:50 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-291-1632

NEW YORK

NOV 1, EDISON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Clarion Hotel & Towers, 2055 Lincoln Hwy., T:22 A:$1.50, 5pm-9:30pm, 609-655-7668
NOV 6, FLORAL PARK, Comic & Sportscard Show, St. Hedwig Parish Hall, 309 Jericho Tpk., T:40 A:$1, 9:30am-4pm, 516-248-4235
NOV 6, MANHATTAN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Roosevelt Hotel, Madison Ave. & 46th St., T:90 A:$2, 10am-6pm, 212-987-0335
NOV 7, STONY BROOK, Baseball Card & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 3131 Nesconset Hwy., T:20 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-689-8138
NOV 7, BAYSIDE, Comic & Card Show, Holy Cross High School, 2620 Francis Lewis Blvd., T:50 A:$1, 9:30am-4:30pm, 718-886-0213
NOV 11, DEER PARK, Baseball & Comic Show, Sons of Italy-Brumidi Lodge, 2075 Deer Park Ave., T:40 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 516-289-7398
NOV 13, OZONE PARK, Card & Comic, Ozone Howard Little League Hall, 97-14 135th Dr., T:30 A:$1, 10am-10pm, 718-845-7240
NOV 13, HAUPPAUGE, Baseball Card & Comic Show, Marriott Grand Ballroom, 1717 Motor Pkwy., T:40+ A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-689-8138
NOV 13, MANHATTAN, Comic & Sportscard Show, Masonic Hall, 71 W. 23rd St., T:30 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-795-4628
NOV 13, NEWBURGH, Comic & Sportscard Show, Holiday Inn, Rt. 17K., T:30 A:$2.,10am-4pm, 908-583-7915
NOV 13-14, BROOKLYN, Sportscard & Comic Show, Ceasar's Bay Bazaar, 8973 Bay Pkwy., T:100 A:Free, Sat:11am-7pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 718-259-6958
NOV 13-14, MOHEGAN LAKE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Westchester Mall, Rte. 6, T:40 A:Free, Sat:10am-9pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 908-525-8089
NOV 14, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 173 Sunrise Hwy., A:Free, 10am-5pm, 516-678-1300
NOV 17, SEAFORD, Comic & Sportscard Show, S. St. Restaurant, 3882 Sunrise Hwy., T:32 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 516-795-4628
NOV 18, OCEANSIDE, Baseball Card & Comic Show, Sons of Italy, 3015 Long Beach Rd, A:Free, 6pm-10pm, 516-289-7398
NOV 19, STONY BROOK, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 3131 Nesconset Hwy., T:20+ A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 516-689-8138
NOV 19, BELLROSE, Comic & Sportscard Show, V.F.W. Hall, 242-37 Braddock Ave., T:25 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 516-795-4628
NOV 20, ARMONK, Baseball, Card & Comic Show, Ramada Inn, T:36 A:$2, 904-356-6122
NOV 20, LYNBROOK, Baseball & Comic Show, St. Mary's Knights of Columbus, 78 Hempstead Ave., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398
NOV 20, HEMPSTEAD, Sports & Comic Convention, Hofstra Univ. Student Ctr., Meadowbrook Pkwy., T:120 A:$3, 10am-5pm, 516-752-7557
NOV 21, BELLMORE, Sportcard & Comic Book Show, E. Bay Temple, 2569 Merrick Rd., T:28 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-795-4628
NOV 28, QUEENS, Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Rego Park Jewish Ctr., 97-30 Queens Blvd., T:32 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-795-4628
NOV 28, WILLISTON PARK, Monthly Card & Comic Show, American Legion Post #144, 730 Willis Ave., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398
NOV 28, JERICHO, Comic & Baseball Show, Fontainebleau Caterers, 18 Jericho Turnpike, T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 516-665-6024
DEC 4, FLORAL PARK, Comic & Sportscard Show, St. Hedwig Parish Hall, 309 Jericho Tpk., T:40 A:$1, 9:30am-4pm, 516-248-4235
DEC 5, STONY BROOK, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 3131 Nesconset Hwy., T:20+ A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-689-8138
DEC 9, DEER PARK, Baseball & Comic Show, Sons of Italy-Brumidi Lodge, 2075 Deer Park Ave., A:Free, 6pm-10pm, 516-289-7398
DEC 11, HAUPPAUGE, Baseball & Comic Show, Marriott Grand Ball Rm., 1717 Motor Pkwy., T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-689-8138
DEC 12, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 173 Sunrise Hwy., A:Free, 10am-5pm, 516-678-1300
DEC 12, WILLISTON PARK, Monthly Card & Comic Show, American Legion Post #144, 730 Willis Ave., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398

NORTH CAROLINA

NOV 7, GREENVILLE, Comic & Sportscards Show, Hilton Inn, 207 S.W. Greenville Blvd., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
NOV 7, WILMINGTON, Comic, Toys, Sportscard Show, Elks Lodge, 5302 Oleander Dr., T:45 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 919-350-0152
NOV 14, FAYETTEVILLE, Comic & Sportscard Show, Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, Cedar Creek Rd., T:37 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
NOV 20, BURLINGTON, Comic & Sportscard Show, Ramada Inn, 2703 Ramada Rd., T:37 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm,

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

804-231-1969
NOV 21, DURHAM, Comics & Sportscard Show, Holiday Inn West, 3460 Hillsborough Rd., T:33 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
NOV 21, ASHEVILLE, Comic & Star Trek Show, Holiday Inn Airport, Exit 9, T:25 A:$3, 11am-4:30pm, 404-381-7272
NOV 28, GREENSBORO, Comic & Sportscard Show, Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, 415 Swing Rd., T:40 A:$1.50, 804-231-1969

OHIO

NOV 6, AKRON, Jubilee Conventions, Holiday Inn (Fairlawn), 4037 Medina Rd., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
NOV 13, CINCINNATI/MILFORD, Sportscard & Comic Show, Live Oaks Vocational School, 5956 Buckwheat Rd., T:50 A:$1, 11am-4pm, 513-575-1900
NOV 14, DAYTON, Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, I-75 @ Little York Rd., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 513-279-9438
NOV 13-14, MANSFIELD, Comic & Collectible Show, Fairhaven Hall, Richland County Fairgrounds, A:$5, Sat:10am-5pm, Sun:10am-4pm, 419-526-0438
NOV 21, WAPAKONETA, Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, Bellefontaine Ave., T:25 A:$.50, 10am-4pm, 419-738-9481
NOV 21, AMHERST, Sportscard & Comic Show, Amherst American Legion Hall, Middle Ridge Rd., T:33 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 216-839-2737
NOV 21, TOLEDO, Comic Book Show, Ramada Hotel, 2340 Reynolds Rd., A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 313-350-2633
NOV 26-28, OHIO, Sports Card & Comic Show, Tri-City Senior Center, 16699 Bagley Rd., T:50 A:$1.50, 10am-5pm every day, 216-243-5748
DEC 12, MENTOR, Card & Comic Show, Travelodge of Mentor, 7701 Reynolds Rd., T:35 A:$1.50, 10am-5pm, 216-255-5179
DEC 12, DANTON, Jubilee Convention, Parke Hotel, 4343 Everhard Rd., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587

OKLAHOMA

NOV 12-14, LAWTON, Collectible Show, Central Mall,T:40 A:Free, Fri-Sat:10am-9pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 316-421-8822

PENNSYLVANIA

NOV 7, ERIE, Comicquest Show, Avalon Hotel, 16 W. 10th St., I-90 Exit 7, A:$2, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
NOV 7, WILKES-BARRE, Cosmic Comic Enterprises, Wilkes-Barre Holiday Inn, T:35 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 717-387-1063
NOV 20, HERMITAGE, Comic & Card Show, Kennedy Christian Gymnasium, 2120 Freeway, T:15 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 216-448-6394
NOV 21, LANGHORNE, Card & Comic Show, Sheraton Buck County, 400 Oxford Valley Rd., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 215-968-8577
NOV 27, WILLIAMSPORT, Comic Book Show, Days Inn Williamsport, 1840 E. 3rd St., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
DEC 11, PITTSBURGH, Jubilee Convention, Holiday Inn, Exit 11, A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587

RHODE ISLAND

NOV 2, PROVIDENCE, Pro-Con, Holiday Inn, Atwells Ave. at I-95, T:60 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 401-724-0870
NOV 11, LINCOLN, Comic Book & Baseball Show, Lonsdale Fire Hall, 224 Front St., T:30 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 401-763-8013
NOV 18, WOONSOCKET, Sportscard & Comic Show, Elks Hall, 380 Social St., T:40 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 401-765-0934
NOV 21, PROVIDENCE, Pro Con, Holiday Inn, Atwells Ave., T:55 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 401-728-8577

TENNESSEE

NOV 7, NASHVILLE, Card, Comic & Toy Show, Ramada Inn Airport, I-40 & Briley Pkwy., T:50 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 615-952-4168
NOV 14, NASHVILLE, Card, Comic & Toy Show, Airport Inn @ Briley Pkwy., T:50 A:$1.50, 9am-5pm, 615-952-4168
NOV 20, FRANKLIN, All-Star Promotions, Holiday Inn–Franklin, Hwy. 96, T:25 A:$1, 9am-5pm, 615-780-3755
NOV 20, NASHVILLE, Sportcard, Comic & Racing Show, Pricetown USA, 1210 Gallatin Rd., T:60 A:.50, 9am-6pm, 615-893-1140
NOV 27-28, KNOXVILLE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Cedar Bluff, Exit 378., T:45 A:$1.50, Sat:9am-5pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 615-469-7227
DEC 4, NASHVILLE, Legends Collectors Show, Airport Inn @ Briley Pkwy., T:20 A:$2, Sat:10am-4pm, 706-234-8210

TEXAS

NOV 6, SAN ANTONIO, Collectible Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 7750 Briar Ridge, T:50 A:$3, 10am-5pm, 210-655-6557
NOV 7, IRVING, M&G Sportscard Show, Best Western, 2611 W. Airport Frwy., T:16-30 A:$2, 9am-6pm, 214-613-4945
NOV 13, HOUSTON, Comic Carnival '93, Holiday Inn—Medical Center, 6701 So. Main St., T:85 A:$4, 10:30am-5pm, 713-659-1210
NOV 13, HOUSTON, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, I-10 & Exit Silber, T:40 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 409-295-4353
NOV 14, SAN ANTONIO, Card & Comic Show, Embassy Suites Hotel, I-10 & Callaghan, T:40 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 210-675-7364
NOV 20, DALLAS, Comic & Card Show, Marriott Hotel, L.B.J. Fwy @ Colt Rd., T:40 A:$1, 9am-4pm, 214-840-3670
NOV 20, FT.WORTH, M&G Sportscard Show, Holiday Inn, 2540 Meacham Blvd., T:35 A:$2, 9am-5pm, 214-613-4055
NOV 20, HOUSTON, Comic & Card Show, Clarion Airport Hotel, 500 N. Sam Houston Pkwy., T:40 A:$2, 9am-4pm, 409-295-4353
NOV 20, NAGODOCHES, Comic Books, Cards & Coins SHow, Holiday Inn, 3400 South St., A:Free, 9am-10pm, 409-564-8294
NOV 20, SAN ANTONIO, Card & Comic Show, Holiday Inn N.E., I-35 & Binz-Engellmann, T:20 A:.50, 10am-5pm, 210-659-1735
NOV 21, AUSTIN, Card & Comic Show, Embassy Suites, 5901 N. I-35, T:40 A:$1.50, 10am-5pm, 409-295-4353
NOV 21, SAN ANTONIO, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 3233 N.W. Loop 410 & I-10, T:45 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 713-589-9600
NOV 26, GREENVILLE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Crossroad Mall, T:25 A:Free, mall hours, 214-279-6810
NOV 27, SAN ANTONIO, Comic & Card Show, Wyndham Hotel, I-10 Exit Wurzbach, T:40 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 210-655-5508
NOV 26-28, GREENVILLE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Crossroads Mall, T:25 A:Free, Mall Hours, 214-279-6810
DEC 11-12, LIVINGSTON, Sportscard & Comic Show, VF Factory Outlet Mall, 440 U.S. Hwy. 59, T:20 A:Free, Sat:9am-5:30pm, Sun:Noon-5:30pm, 409-295-3516

VERMONT

NOV 7, GUILFORD, Card & Comic Show, Guilford Fire Dept., T:20 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 802-257-0971

VIRGINIA

NOV 5-7, RICHMOND, Fall Classic Card & Comic Race Celebrity Collectible Convention, Clover Leaf Mall, Midlothian Pike off Chippenham Pkwy., T:135 A:Free, mall hours, 804-674-5480
NOV 6, FREDERICKSBURG, Comic & Sportscard Show, Best Western, 543 Warrenton Rd., T:29 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
NOV 6, WARRENTON, Card, Comic & Stamp Show, St. Johns Parish Hall, Winchester & King St., T:30 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 703-347-1597
NOV 7, NORFOLK, All-Star Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Lake Wright Quality Inn, I-64 at Northampton Blvd. Exit, T:35 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 804-545-0857
NOV 13, ALEXANDRIA, Comic & Sportscard Show, Quality Inn, 6461 Edsall Rd., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
NOV 14, NORFOLK, All-Heroes Comic Book Show, Lake Wright Quality Inn, I-64 at Northampton Blvd. Exit, T:35 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 804-545-0857
NOV 19-21, CHRISTIANSBURG, Santa Sports Card & Comic Race Show, New River Valley Mall, Rte. 460 West off I-81, T:40 A:Free, mall hours, 804-674-5480
NOV 19-21, STAUNTON, Sportscard & Comics Show, 1131 Greenville Ave., Exit 220, T:55 A:Free, mall hours, 804-320-0136
NOV 20-21, NORFOLK, Mid-Month Collectors Show, Sheraton Inn, Military Circle Mall, T:18 A:Free, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-4pm, 804-463-2904
NOV 21, ROANOKE, Comicon, Salem Civic Ctr., Shenandoah Ave., T:50 A:$4, 10am-4pm, 703-992-6629
NOV 26-28, RICHMOND, Thanksgiving Sports Card & Comic Race Feast, Azalea Mall, corners of Brook Rd. and Azalea Ave., T:110 A:Free, mall hours, 804-674-5480
NOV 27, RICHMOND, Comic & Sportscard Show, Comfort Inn Midtown, 3200 West Broad St., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 4, FREDERICKSBURG, Comic & Sportscard Show, Best Western, 543 Warrenton Rd., T:29 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-7969
DEC 5, GREENVILLE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Hilton Inn, 207 S.W. Greenville Blvd., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 12, ALEXANDRIA, Sportscard & Comic Show, Quality Inn, 6461 Edsall Rd., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 12, TYSON'S CORNER, Comic & Non-Sportscard Show, 7801 Leesburg Pike, T:65 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 703-503-5834

WASHINGTON

NOV 6-7, MARYSVILLE, Sports Card & Comic Book Marathon, Marysville Mall (Exit 199 off I-5), T:50 A:Free, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 206-820-0218
NOV 13-14, KIRKLAND, Sports Card & Comic Book Supershow, Totem Lake Mall (Exit 20B E. off I-405), T:65 A:Free, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 206-820-0218
NOV 21, BOTHELL, Sports Card & Comic Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, 24323 Bothell Hwy. (Exit 26 off I-405), T:23 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 206-820-0218

WEST VIRGINIA

NOV 7, PARKERSBURG, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, I-77 & Exit 17 Rte. 50, T:40 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 216-499-6056
NOV 13-14, CHARLESTON, Comic & Collectible Show, Charleston Civic Ctr., T:50 A:$2, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-4pm, 304-744-5007 ★

HEY

Having a comic book show? Convention listings in the *Wizard* Show Calendar are

FREE

SEND US:
NAME OF THE SHOW, DATE AND HOURS, CITY, STATE & ADDRESS, # OF TABLES & PRICES, ADMISSION CHARGE, CONTACT NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.

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For certainty of placement, send information 6 weeks prior to month of show (comic book shows *only*). If possible, do not leave out any information. Shows missing date, city, or state information will not be listed. *Do not send flyers*. Ad rates available upon request. *PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.*

E.G.O.*

PEER PRESSURE

by Todd McFarlane

In my opinion, there are three kinds of people—those who lead, those who follow, and those who are in the way. Right now, with the way this business, Image Comics, and my *Spawn* is going, there seem to be a lot of people who are standing in the way. I find it somewhat difficult to see why that is. The Image founders walked away from—call it whatever you want, be it Marvel, DC, or corporate America—to make our opinions known about the system. When we left, we never forced anyone to join us. I find it rather amusing, at this point in the game, that the people who throw the most criticism at us are the people who, in some roundabout way, have benefited from our exodus.

I think there's been a form of free agency in the industry since we formed Image. There're new splinter companies which have started, and there are more options in existence than there were two years ago, when there was an old tradition of bouncing around from Marvel to DC. Corporate America doesn't seem to be yelling back at us, but our fellow peers—the creative people—seem to be yelling at us. If you don't want to be part of Image, fine. I've got no problem with that; we're not asking you to join us. If you're not ever going to work for us and we're never going to ask you to work for us, then I don't understand why you want to block us from doing what we want to do.

On that matter, when we broke away, we never broke away to say that we had all the answers or to say that we did the best comic books or to say that every creator has to work for us. We broke away to say that we didn't like where we were working. I don't understand why some of my peers take every possible chance to tell other people about our shortcomings, since, on some kind of level, we are succeeding. But take an analogy: if my mom opens up a shoe store, and she knows nothing about selling shoes, and she isn't successful, what difference does it make to the people living in that area? But, god forbid, what if she knows nothing about selling or distributing shoes but somehow sells more shoes than anyone in the city? I don't see how that would be a concern to anyone else in the neighborhood, either.

It's kind of weird to be in the field that we are, since, just because our business is entertainment, we get into arguments over things that aren't really applicable 99 percent of the time in any other job.

Even if we don't know what we're doing, as long as we're selling the comic books and we seem to be happy not working for corporate America, what difference does it make how we're doing it?

The distributors and retailers have valid reasons to complain to us for our business decisions because we affect their livelihood. But I don't affect John Byrne's livelihood one iota. He doesn't collect *Spawn*, yet he seems to want to educate the public about our "bad deeds." I'm not picking on John, because he's one of many, but what difference does it make to him? As a creative person, if you're not doing business with us, if you've never worked with us, if you will probably never work with us, what difference does it make to you personally how we conduct our business? The only thing I can see right now is that it boils down to jealousy.

The other thing that I think is blurred in other people's vision is the fact that when Todd McFarlane talks, he's not talking for Image, he's talking for Todd McFarlane. Ninety-nine percent of what I say is Todd McFarlane's personal opinion, period. This column is my personal opinion. The odd time, I'll say something that carries over for the company. A lot of people believe that, when one of the Image founders says something, we're speaking for Image, when usually it's our personal opinion. Just because I happen to be a part of Image doesn't mean that I'm speaking for the rest of the guys at Image.

I'd like some feedback from people in the industry—my colleagues specifically—on exactly why they are so frustrated with us when they don't have to deal with us on any kind of business or creative level. We're not really hurting the system, and we've even created a lot of friendships. A year ago, John Byrne and Peter David didn't really respect each other. Now, they have a common bond—they both tolerate one another and debate about Image. If nothing else, besides giving heartaches to retailers and distributors, we've created free agency and forged new friendships out there. On some levels, we've done some good, and if you're not dealing with us, I don't understand why you have to get in our way. I don't see Peter Bagge or Chester Brown, two creators who do alternative comics, saying anything about Image. It's only the people who do superhero comics who are trying to block us from doing superhero comics.

All I'm asking is: If you don't want to lead—which you don't, because leaders are hated—and if you don't want to follow—which is fine; we're not asking you to join—then just get the hell out of the way. To create change, you're going to have to go through things. If people are going to get in the way, then I'm going to have to go through them. I don't care what you do with your book, and I'm just asking that you stop caring about what we do with ours, unless you happen to collect, sell, or distribute them. ☆

Any industry professional who wishes to respond to the opinions stated here, or who would like to submit their opinion on a matter dealing with the comic industry, should write to: E.G.O., P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* or its editorial staff.

TAKE A TRIP BACK IN TIME!

...NOT *THAT* FAR!

ACT NOW! THERE'S MORE WHERE THESE CAME FROM, BUT ONLY WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!!!

WIZARD BACK ISSUES

Wizard #15

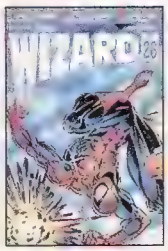
Get wet, dark and beamed up! *Wetworks'* wild Whilce Portacio previews his new project, the spotlight shines on the Darkstars and Dark Horse Comics, and William Shatner relates his trip from *Trek* to *Tek World!* Plus much more, all under an exclusive Wetworks cover by Portacio! You've gotta get this one!

Wizard #17

Superlative issue! Megabusy Fabian Nicieza takes the time to talk to us, as do the heads of the supersuccessful Valiant company, and the ultratalented *Cerebus* creator, Dave Sim! Dracula also steps (and bites) in, and more, with a Valiant cover by Lapham and Layton! Superfraggin' good!

Wizard #26

Are you a Spider-Man, Spectre, or Mighty Magnor fan? Hurtin' for knowledge about DC's *Crisis*, or about the future of *Tribe* or *Q-Unit*? Then this one's for you! The staffers and creators of all the above, including Bagley, Ostrander, Argonés, and Stroman, speak out, below a Spidey cover by Bagley! Coolness!



100 Most Collectible Comics

So you think you know what's hot in comics, huh? Well, this one lets you know what's *really* hot and collectible, from Year One (no, not Batman) to the present! PLUS talks with creators and dealers about their faves and picks, and with Will Eisner (this issue's cover artist) on the Spirit! A true collector's bible!

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W I Z A R D T O P T E N

top ten excuses superman could have used to explain the disappearance of clark kent.

10. *He went on a bender with Tony Stark, and ended up butt-nekkid in a hotel in Tijuaña with a new tattoo.*
9. *He had fallen and he couldn't get up.*
8. *The line to go see* Last Action Hero *was really, really big (but nobody woulda believed this).*
7. *He was out selling off all of his Marvel stock.*
6. *He had just washed his hair and he couldn't do a thing with it.*
5. *He was buried beneath a pile of Image books that were being returned by his local retailer.*
4. *Visited Euro-Disneyland, was beaten by rowdy Frenchmen and hospitalized.*
3. *He was out hocking copies of the bagged* Superman #75 *before word got out that Supes was only sorta dead.*
2. *He was recovering from his Amy Fisher-inflicted gunshot wound.*
1. *He was out helping Superboy get his fake I.D.*

Congratulations

to the winners of *Wizard* #25's Twenty-Five Books contest (answer—WAR MACHINE):

Grand Prize:

Dan Berman (age 12) - Agoura Hills, Calif.

First Prize:

Jason Anderson - Lawton, Okla.
Graham McCollum (age 15) - Pace, Fla.
Edward Ladyka (age 20) - Scranton, Pa.
Tom Major - St. Louis, Mont.
Joe Brantley (age 21) - Magnardville, Tenn.
Otha Johnson - Burbank, Calif.
Matt Culotti (age 13) - Schenectady, N.Y.
Ian Palmer - Albuquerque, N.M.
Wayne Smith (age 13) - Fruitport, Mich.
Travis Bowden (age 11) - Stone Mtn., Ga.
Laszlo Kovaes - Quebec, Canada
Mike Todd (age 15) - Austin, Texas
J.P. Henderson (age 13) - Hunting Valley, Ohio
Kevin Sanchez - New Orleans, La.
Robert Poole - Petaluma, Calif.
Julian Martin (age 23) - Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
Gabriel Foster (age 15) - Lady Lake, Fla.
Kelly Langston-Smith - Aurora, Calif.
Stan Timerson (age 13) - Columbia, S.C.
Jeremy Holbrools - Macon, Ga.
Eric Ewart (age 13) - Connell, Wash.
Bryan Bone (age 13) - British Columbia, Canada
Richard Shults (age 16) - Springdale, Wash.
Michael D'andrea (age 16) - Tinley Park, Ill.
Matt Runyaen (age 12) - Wilmette, Ill.

Second Prize:

John Centeno (age 13) - Gaithersburg, Md.
Eric Smith - Fresno, Calif.
Neal Saenz (age 22) - Dallas, Texas
Stanley Yee - Ontario, Canada
Bruce Gravel (age 41) - Ontario, Canada
Amir Sharafeh (age 23) - Sacramento, Calif.
Jake Mason (age 14) - Citrus Heights, Calif.
Larry Lane (age 31) - New Brunswick, Canada
Todd Bowden (age 14) - Sykesville, Md.
Jim Kodz (age 17) - Fairfield, Conn.
Mario Lorente (age 13) - Milpitas, Calif.
Marc Fong (age 16) - San Jose, Calif.
Brain Ertl (age 13) - Spring Lake, Mich.
Bobby Geyer (age 13) - Fort Wayne, Ind.
J. C. (age 14) - Westfield, Mass.
Henry Serrato (age 19) - Harlingen, Texas
Ronald Cogar (age 12) - Summersville, W.Va.
Martyn Ellis - Spring, Texas
James Berger (age 17) - Buzzards Bay, Mass.
Joe Ward (age 14) - Folsom, Calif.
Andrew Korfias (age 11) - Tarpon Springs, Fla.
Shayne Yoshida (age 22) - Hilo, Hawaii
Dan Molina (age 22) - Isla Vista, Calif.
John Vettraino - Novato, Calif.
Derek Chan - Tampa, Fla.

Third Prize:

Jason Pike (age 12) - Hart Selle, Ala.
Charlie Kemp (age 12) - Douglaston, N.Y.
Brian Marquis (age 12) - Litchfield, Conn.
Brian Christman (age 23) - Reading, Pa.
Steven Rotondo (age 17) - Reading, Mass.
Daniel Wiggins (age 13) - Prattville, Ala.
Ryan Byerly (age 13) - Colorado Springs, Colo.
Jason Marlatt (age 21) - Cambridge, Ohio
John Vettraina (age 12) - Novatto, Calif.
Anna Bergthorsdottir (age 16) - Reykjavik, Iceland
Marc Lassoff (age 10) - Avon, Conn.
Jake Bourgeois (age 12) - Gainesville, Fla.
Daniel Brown (age 21) - Bankston, Ala.
Arnold Martin (age 48) - Huntington, Ind.
Rodney Roberts - Clarkville, Va.
Barry Fountain - Atwater, Calif.
Brandon York (age 18) - Falmouth, Ky.
Tom Major - St. Louis, Mo.
Travis Kleeburg (age 13) - Oxnard, Calif.
William Hahn (age 25) - Tyler, Texas
David Murlsdorf (age 16) - Queens, N.Y.
Jonathan Veazey - Lawrenceville, Ga.
Alex Dunegan (age 13) - Windermere, Fla.
Tsung Chen - Houston, Texas
Conan Kahle - Honolulu, Hawaii

SPECIAL THANKS

Chris
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Champaign, Ill. 61820

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Gary Guzzo
Marvel Comics

Steve Massarsky, Jon Hartz & Bob Layton
Valiant

Matt Hawkins
Extreme Studios

Patricia Jeres
DC Comics

Ronnie Noize & Diana Schutz
Dark Horse Comics

Alan Payne
Malibu Comics

Jim Perham
Valiant

Jim Salicrup
Topps Comics

Clark Smith & Janet Jackson
Defiant

Pete Stone
Continuity Comics

And a very special thanks to everyone we missed, and to all the readers out there who helped make *Wizard* the #1 Guide to Comics!

CORRECTIONS

The action figure price guide solicited for this issue of Wizard *will appear in a later issue.*

WIZARD: The Guide To Comics volume one, number twenty-eight (28), December 1993.

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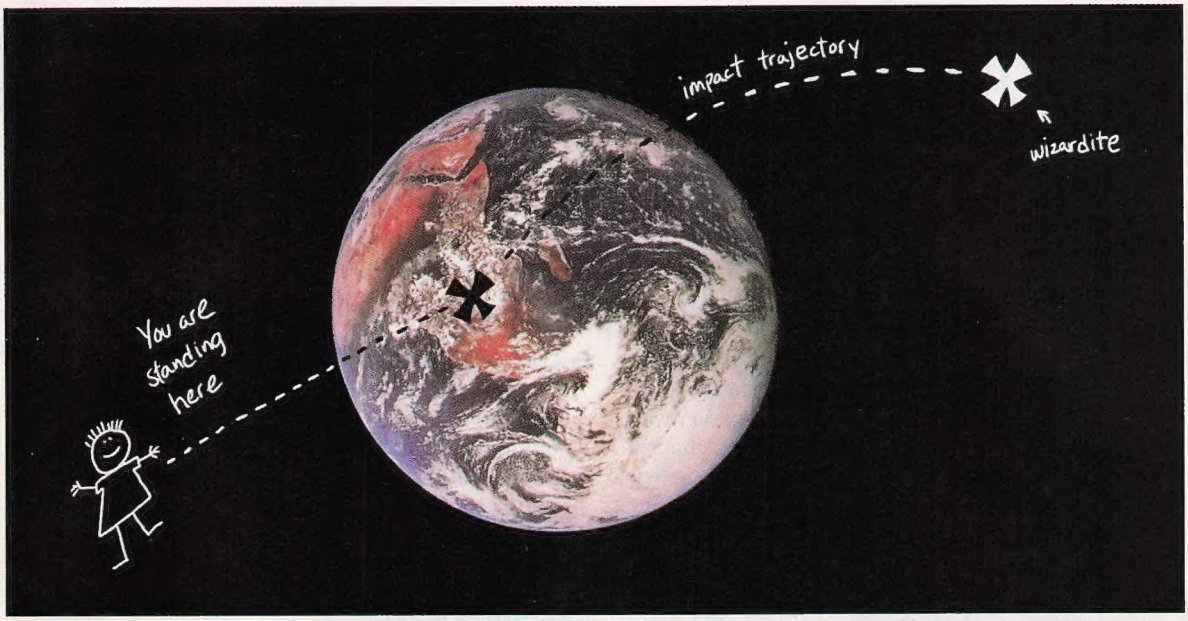

Gigantic Wizardite Is Discovered Hurtling Toward Earth! All Of Humanity Endangered.

(AP) Washington, D.C. Astronomers and astrophysicists have unanimously agreed that the huge Wizardite, first sighted by the London National Observatory, will definitely strike North America in December of this year. The colossal Wizardite, dubbed "Issue 29" by scientists, is said to be the largest ever to enter the solar system. Thermal neutron analysis by the ultra-secret military satellite "the Jumbo McCallum," indicates the monstrous mass has a lava-like, red-hot core of "McFarlane Matter," reputedly the most powerful element in the known universe. At the Center For Unnatural Acts Of Cosmic Consequences in Chestnut Ridge, N.Y., planners were preparing for the worst.

"This could be the Big One," was all curt Acting Director Patrick O'Neill said to the crowd of reporters as he drove into the heavily guarded compound. Earlier this week, O'Neill and top Offensive Weapons Command honcho G. S. Shamus held a terse press conference which confirmed many scientists' secret fears (and their fear of secrets). "We have absolutely no defense against this sort of thing," Shamus muttered. "When you've gotta go, you've gotta go, and boy, gosh, gol-leeee, you better not be under this baby when it finally lands."

Press releases from the White House were largely contradictory, but Acting Press Secretary Arsenio Hall did announce that President Clinton had expressed an interest in acquiring a souvenir chunk of Issue 29, "should there be any of it"—yes, *any*—"left after the Wizardite wipes out North America."

Artist's conception of Wizardite "McFarlane Matter" core.

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Surgeon General's Warning: Repeated lifting of "Issue 29" can result in vertigo, shortness of breath, tennis elbow, stuttering, hernias, mild euphoria and an involuntary uttering of the word "Cool!". Spawn & Violator © & ™ 1993 Todd MacFarlane

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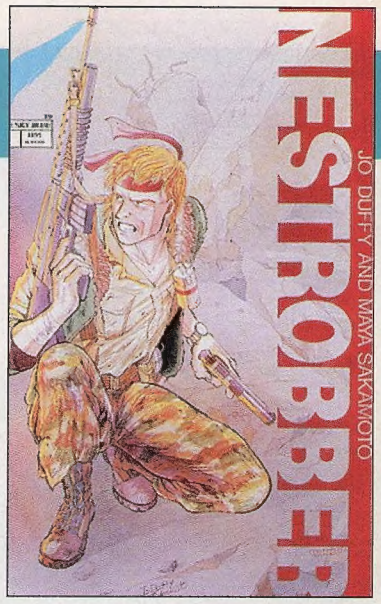
WIZARD Profile



Here's looking at...JO DUFFY

Editor, freelance writer, publisher: Jo Duffy is no stranger to the comics industry. A veteran of the industry for 16 years, Duffy has built a solid reputation as a writer with great storytelling abilities and capable of adept characterization.

One of six children, the 39-year-old Duffy was born in New York City and raised in the greater New York City area. She was introduced to comics when she read her older brother's comics while he wasn't looking. Aside from reading comics at a young age, she attributes her influences to "fiction in any form: movies, t.v., and comics." She also confesses that her work is heavily influenced by Japanese comics and entertainment.

Duffy's career in comics began right after she graduated from Wellesley College, Mass., when she was hired by Marvel Comics as a proofreader. It wasn't too long before she was given a shot at scripting after she wrote an article about the *Man From Atlantis* television series that ran in the *Man From Atlantis* comic book. Her first comic script was a five-page story written in 1977 starring Wolverine (who Duffy considers to be her "dream character") and Hercules. Duffy says it's "one of the most reprinted stories of all-time." She later became an editor for Marvel, handling such titles as *Daredevil, Dr. Strange, Dreadstar*, and others. As a freelance writer, she has written for such Marvel titles as *Daredevil, Power Man and Iron Fist, Star Wars*, and Wolverine.

Duffy left Marvel in late 1986, feeling she had done all she could with editing, and began to pursue writing full-time. She's currently finishing up her run on Epic's *Akira*, for which she writes the English translation of Kasuhiro Otomo's epic story. Additionally, she's writing the monthly *Catwoman* series for DC, as well as various stories in *A Distant Soil* with artist Colleen Doran. Duffy is also the publisher of Blue Sky Blue, which prints the critically acclaimed *Nestrobber* series, also written by her and illustrated by Maya Sakamoto. (Doran draws illustrations for Duffy's back-up prose stories in *Nestrobber*.) Future projects include more stories in *A Distant Soil* and *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark*.

As for a life after comics, Duffy has no such plans. "I have no patience for people who look at this industry as a short means to an end. I think you should only be doing comics if you love the medium and if you're proud to be doing them and doing your best work."

First comic book read...
It was a 1950s Batman annual full of a collection of the funkiest Batman stories, where Batman and Robin would travel through time.

Favorite comic of all time...
It's impossible to say. It depends on how I'm feeling. There are just too many good comics out there.

Favorite work of your own...
Nestrobber, because I'm getting better as a writer all the time and I have total control over it. Also, I'm working with two of my favorite artists—Maya Sakamoto and Colleen Doran.

The one person you'd like to meet...
Kazumi Morohoshi, who is the center member of the Japanese roller skating pop group called Hikaru Genji. Meeting him would be unbelievably fun.

Most embarrassing moment...
It will probably be when this get published!

What superpower would you want?
Flight or telekinesis—it's a toss-up—because both would be useful in a fight. With a little imagination, you can do so much without doing much property damage.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Probably Dunkin' Donuts because of the flavors, the high energy, and the fact that it's complete crap and terrible for me. In the middle of the night, I want self-indulgent *garbage*.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, my Barbi doll, which I dressed up in superhero costumes. As an adult, my 1987 Red Toyota MR 2, because it's fun to drive and it gives me complete freedom. Until I run out of gas money.

Favorite pastime or hobby...
Playing with my cats, gardening, and swimming.

The last good book you read...
It was a re-read of *The Grand Sophie* by Georgette Heyre.

Do you have a nickname?
Jo. It is the center part of a name that I don't let anyone outside my family use.

Who would you most like to work with?
Walt Disney, because everything about him I admire. He made my childhood a joy and [what] I learned about him as a professional made me admire him more and more.

Why do you read *Wizard*?
It's the best way to stay in touch with what's hot in comics today. ☆

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